Sri Radha-kunda and Sri Syama-kunda Yatra

The Ambrosial liquid form of Srimati Radharani and Lord Sri Krishna

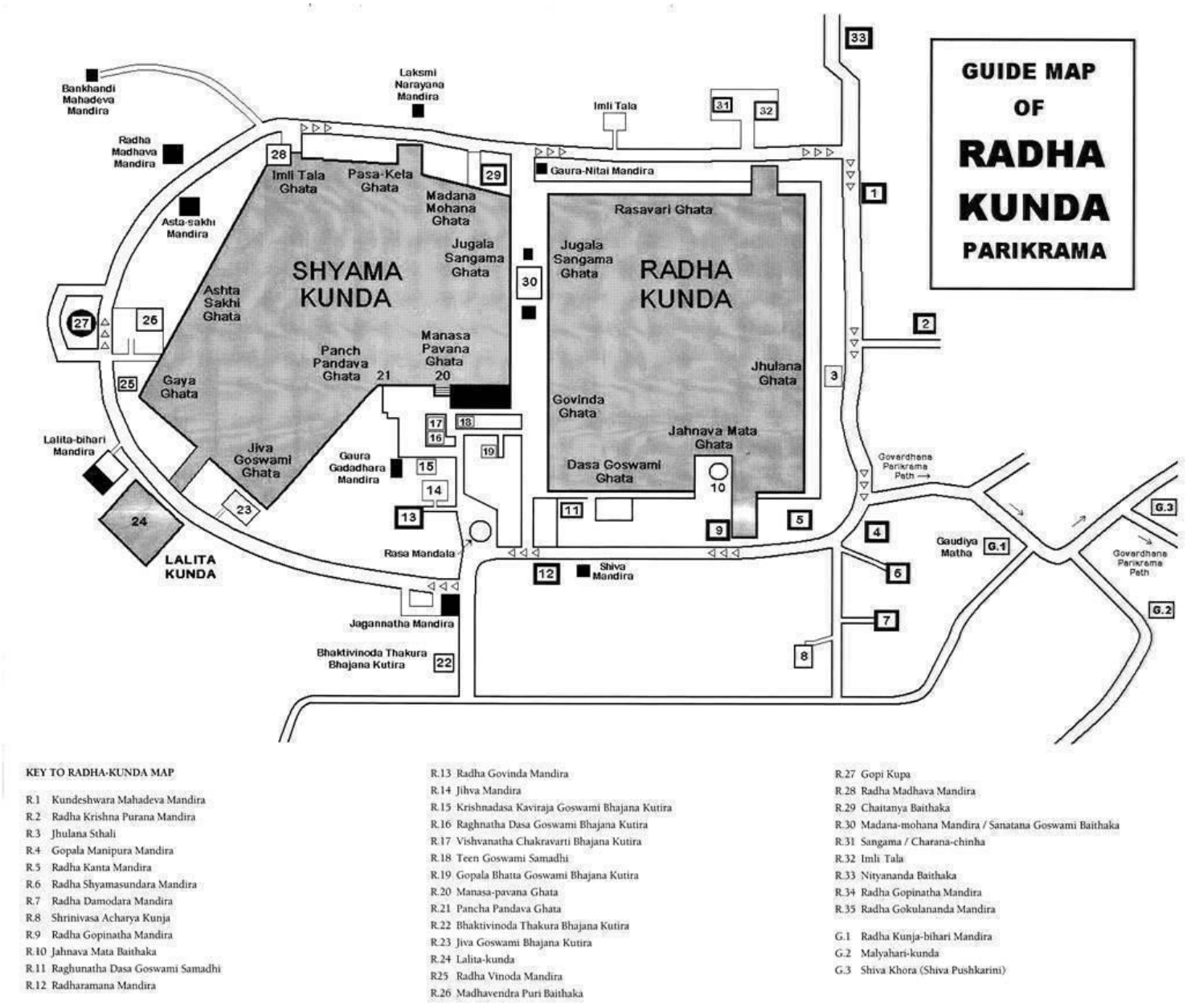
The Most Sacred Place in the Universe

Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama

"The super-excellent Sri Radha-kunda stands supreme, for it is overflooded with the ambrosial nectarean prema of the Lord of Gokula, Sri Krishna. Where, then, is that intelligent person who is unwilling to serve this divine Radha-kunda, which is situated at the foot of Govardhana Hill?" (Upadesamrta, The Nectar of Instruction, *Text 9)*

Sri Radha-kunda

Sri Syama-kunda



KEY TO RADHA-KUNDA MAP

R.1 Kundeshwara Mahadeva Mandira
R.2 Radha Krishna Purana Mandira
R.3 Jhulana Sthali
R.4 Gopala Manipura Mandira
R.5 Radha Kanta Mandira
R.6 Radha Shyamasundara Mandira
R.7 Radha Damodara Mandira
R.8 Shrinivasa Acharya Kunja
R.9 Radha Gopinatha Mandira
R.10 Jahnava Mata Baithaka
R.11 Raghunatha Dasa Goswami Samadhi
R.12 Radharamana Mandira
R.13 Radha Govinda Mandira
R.14 Jihva Mandira
R.15 Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami Bhajana Kutira
R.16 Raghnatha Dasa Goswami Bhajana Kutira
R.17 Vishvanatha Chakravarti Bhajana Kutira
R.18 Teen Goswami Samadhi
R.19 Gopala Bhatta Goswami Bhajana Kutira
R.20 Manasa-pavana Ghata
R.21 Pancha Pandava Ghata
R.22 Bhaktivinoda Thakura Bhajana Kutira
R.23 Jiva Goswami Bhajana Kutira
R.24 Lalita-kunda
R25 Radha Vinoda Mandira
R.26 Madhavendra Puri Baithaka
R.27 Gopi Kupa
R.28 Radha Madhava Mandira
R.29 Chaitanya Baithaka
R.30 Madana-mohana Mandira / Sanatana Goswami Baithaka
R.31 Sangama / Charana-chinha
R.32 Imli Tala
R.33 Nityananda Baithaka
R.34 Radha Gopinatha Mandira
R.35 Radha Gokulananda Mandira

G.1 Radha Kunja-bihari Mandira
G.2 Malyahari-kunda
G.3 Shiva Khora (Shiva Pushkarini)

Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda Parikrama

PS: This article is also published on website –
[Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda Yatra]

Places to visit at Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda:

1. Sangam Ratna-vedi (Yugala-sangam-ghata)
2. Jhulana-sthali (Swing pastime in the rainy season)
3. Sri Sri Radha Krishna Purana Mandira
4. Sri Gopala Manipura Mandira
5. Sri Jahnava-mata Baithaka
6. Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira
7. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami Samadhi
8. Sri Sri Radha Radha Kanta Mandira of Sri Vakresvara Pandita
9. Sudevi Kunja
10. Sri Sri Radha Syamasundara Mandira
11. Sri Sri Radha Damodara Mandira

12. Srinivasa Acarya Kunja
13. Sri Sri Radha Ramana Mandira
14. Govinda-ghata
15. Three Gosvami Samadhi
16. Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami Bhajana-kutira
17. Sri Sri Radha Govinda Mandira and Rasa-mandala
18. Giriraja Jihva Mandira (Tongue of Sri Giriraja Govardhana)
19. Pilu tree
20. Pancha Pandava ghata
21. Manasa-Pavana-ghata
22. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami bhajana-kutira
23. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura bhajana-kutira
24. Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami bhajana-kutira
25. Sri Sri Caitanya Gadadhara Mandira
26. Sri Narahari Sarkara Samadhi in Dhauli-kunja
27. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura bhajana-kutira
28. Bhanu Khor and Balarama-kunda
29. Jagannatha Mandira
30. Sri Sadbhuja Mahaprabhu Mandira Sri Sri Radha Prema-bikhari Mandira
31. Sri Sri Radha Vraja-mohana Mandira
32. Srila Jiva Gosvami Bhajana-kutira
33. Lalita-kunda, Mohana-kunda and Asta-sakhis-kundas
34. Sri Giriraja-sila
35. Sri Sri Lalita-bihari Mandira
36. Manipura Maharaja Mandira (Radha Govinda Temple)
37. Sri Sri Radha Vinoda Mandira
38. Gop Kua
39. Sri Madhavendra Puri Baithaka
40. Asta-sakhi Mandira
41. Sri Sri Nitai-Gaura Sitanatha Mandira
42. Sri Sri Radha Madhava Mandira
43. Sri Rama Mandira
44. Sri Ban-khandi Mahadeva Mandira
45. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu Baithaka (Tamala-tala)
46. Pasa-khela ghata – dice game, stealing Krishna’s flute, Sun-God worship

47. Sripada Vallabhacarya Baithaka
48. Sri Sri Radha Madana-mohana Mandira
49. Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai Mahaprabhu Mandira
50. Imli-tala and Sri Sri Vraja-mohana Mandira
51. Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira
52. Lord Nityananda Prabhu Baithaka
53. Sri Banke-bikari Mandira at Sangam
54. Sri Sri Radha Gokulananda Mandira and Srila Lokanatha Gosvami Puspa Samadhi
55. Sri Kundesvara Mahadeva Mandira
56. Sri Sri Radha Kunja-bihari Gaudiya Matha
57. Malyahari-kunda
58. Siva Khor (Siva Puskarini)
59. Ramesvara Mahadeva Mandira
60. Golden Mahaprabhu Mandira
61. Radha Surabhi Gaushala (Surabhi Gauseva Niketana)
62. Manipuri Sri Nutana-bihari Mandira
63. Anand Bazar

The pinnacle of devotion, Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda are situated about 20 kms from Vrindavana Dhama and 27 kms from Mathura. Lost to the world for almost fifty centuries, Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda were re-discovered by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu when He was on pilgrimage to Vraja-mandala. Today, these small lakes, found at the head of Govardhana Hill, attract thousands of pilgrims every year. Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda represent the eyes of Sri Giriraja Govardhana, which is in the shape of a peacock.

Prayers by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu to Sri Radha-kunda

Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila chapter 18 texts 4 to 14 describe: *Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu asked the local people, "Where is Radha-kunda?" No one could inform Him, and the brahmana accompanying Him did not know either. The Lord then understood that the holy place called Radha-kunda was no longer visible. However, being the omniscient Supreme Personality of Godhead, He discovered Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda in two paddy fields. There was only a little water, but He took His bath there. When the people of the village saw Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu taking His bath in those two ponds in the middle of the paddy fields, they were very much astonished. The Lord then offered His prayers to Sri Radha-kunda.*

"The attraction of Radha-kunda is as sweet as that of Srimati Radharani. Similarly, the glories of the kunda [lake] are as great as Srimati Radharani's. Because of its wonderful transcendental qualities, Radha-kunda is as dear to Krishna as Srimati Radharani. It was in that lake that the all-opulent Lord Sri Krishna performed His pastimes with Srimati Radharani with great pleasure and transcendental bliss. Whoever bathes just once in Radha-kunda attains Srimati Radharani's loving attraction for Sri Krishna. Who within this world can describe the glories and sweetness of Sri Radha-kunda?" Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu thus offered prayers to Radha-kunda. Overwhelmed by ecstatic love, He danced on the bank, remembering the pastimes Lord Krishna performed on the bank of Radha-kunda. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu then

marked His body with tilaka made from the mud of Radha-kunda, and with the help of Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya, He collected some of the mud and took it with Him.

Slaying of Aristasura by Lord Krishna

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 10 chapter 36 and *Krishna book chapter 36* describe the pastime of the slaying of the bull demon Aristasura by Lord Krishna. The demon Arista wanted to kill Krishna and Balarama, and thus he assumed the form of a huge bull with sharp horns. Everyone in Krishna's cowherd village became terrified when Aristasura approached it. Appearing in the form of a bull with a large hump, he made the earth tremble as he tore it apart with his hooves. The clouds hovered about sharp-horned Aristasura's hump, mistaking it for a mountain, and when the cowherd men and ladies caught sight of the demon, they were struck with terror. The strident reverberation of his roar so frightened the pregnant cows and women that they lost their fetuses in miscarriages. When the Supreme Lord saw the cowherd community distraught and fleeing in fear, He calmed them, saying, "Don't be afraid."

When the bull demon charged Him, He seized him by the horns and threw him about six yards. Though weakened, Arista still wanted to attack Krishna. Thus, dripping with sweat, he charged the Lord once again. This time Krishna grabbed his horns, threw him to the ground, and thrashed him like a pile of wet clothing. Vomiting blood and profusely excreting stool and urine, kicking his legs, and rolling his eyes about, Aristasura thus went painfully to the abode of Death. The demigods honoured Lord Krishna by scattering flowers upon Him. *Having thus killed Arista, Krishna who is a festival for the gopis' eyes entered the cowherd village with Balarama.*

Appearance of Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda

Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.36.16 purport describes that from the *Puranas*, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has quoted twenty verses describing a joking conversation between Radha and Krishna that took place after Krishna had killed the demon, Arista. This conversation describes the origin of Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda, Radha's and Krishna's bathing ponds. The verses are as follows:

masman sprsadya vrsabhardana hanta mugdha
ghoro 'suro 'yam ayi krsna tad apy ayam gauh
vrto yatha dvija ihasty ayi niskrith kim
sudhyed bhavams tri-bhuvana-sthita-tirtha-krcchart

"The innocent young gopis said, 'Ah, Krishna, don't touch us now, O killer of a bull! Alas, even though Arista was a terrible demon, still he was a male cow, so You will have to undergo atonement, just as Lord Indra did after killing Vrtasura. But how can You purify Yourself without going to the trouble of visiting every single holy place in the three worlds?'"

kim paryatami bhuvanany adhunaiva sarva
aniya tirtha-vitatih karavani tasu
snanam vilokayata tavad idam mukundah
procyaiva tatra krtavan bata parsni-ghatam

"[Krishna replied,] 'Why should I have to wander throughout the entire universe? I will at once bring all the countless pilgrimage places here and take My bath in them. Just watch!' With this, Lord Mukunda struck His heel on the ground."

patalato jalam idam kila bhogavatya
ayatam atra nikhila api tirtha-sanghah
agacchateti bhagavad-vacasa ta etya

tatraiva rejur atha krsna uvaca gopih

"[Then He said,] 'This is the water of the Bhogavati River, coming from the Patala region. And now, O holy places, all of you please come here!' When the Supreme Lord had spoken these words, all the holy places went there and appeared before Him. Krishna then addressed the gopis as follows."

tirthani pasyata harer vacasa tavaivam
naiva pratima iti ta atha tīrtha-varyah
procuh krtanjali-puta lavanabdhir asmi
ksirabdhir asmi srnutamara-dirghokasmi

"'See all the holy places!'

"But the gopis replied, 'We don't see them as You describe.'

"Then those best of holy places, joining their palms in supplication, spoke up:

"'I am the salt ocean.'

"'I am the Ocean of Milk.'

"'I am the Amara-dirghika.'"

sona 'pi sindhur aham asmi bhavami tamra-
parni ca puskaram aham ca sarasvati ca
godavari ravi-suta sarayuh prayago
revasmi pasyata jalam kuruta pratitim

"'I am the river, Sona.'

"'I am the Sindhu.'

"'I am the Tamraparni.'

"'I am the holy place Puṣkara.'

"'I am the river Sarasvati.'

"'And we are the Godavari, Yamuna and Reva rivers and the confluence of rivers at Prayaga. Just see our waters!'"

snatva tato harir ati-prajagalbha eva
suddhah saro 'py akararavam sthita-sarva-tirtham
yusmabhir atma-janusīha krto na dharmah
ko 'pi ksitav atha sakhīr nijagada radha

"After purifying Himself by bathing, Lord Hari became quite arrogant and said, 'I have produced a pond containing all the various holy places, whereas you gopis must never have executed any religious duties on this earth for the pleasure of Lord Brahma.' Then Srimati Radharani addressed Her girlfriends as follows."

karyam mayapy ati-manohara-kundam ekam

tasmad yatadhvam iti tad-vacanena tabhih
sri-krsna-kunda-tata-pascima-disya-mando
gartah krto vrsabha-daitya-khurair vyaloki

"'I must create an even more beautiful pond. So go to work!' Having heard these words, the *gopis* saw that Aristasura's hooves had dug a shallow ditch just west of Sri Krishna's pond."

tatradra-mrn-mrdula-gola-tatih prati-sva-
hastoddhrta anati-dura-gata vidhaya
divyam sarah prakatitam ghatika-dvayena
tabhir vilokya sarasam smarate sma krsnah

"At that nearby spot, all the gopis began digging up lumps of soft mud with their hands, and in this way a divine pond manifested in the short span of an hour. Krishna was astonished to see the lake they produced."

proce ca tīrtha-salilaih paripurayaitan
mat-kundatah sarasijaksi sahalibhis tvam
radha tada na na na neti jagada yasmat
tvat-kunda-niram uru-go-vadha-patakaktam

"He said, 'Go ahead, lotus-eyed one. You and Your companions should fill this pond with water from Mine.'

"But Radha replied, 'No, no, no, no! This is impossible, since the water of Your pond is contaminated by Your terrible sin of killing a cow.'"

ahrtya punya-salilam sata-koti-kumbhaih
sakhy-arbudena saha manasa-jahnavitah
etat sarah sva-madhuna paripurayami
tenaiva kīrtim atulam tanavani loke

"'I will have My countless gopi companions bring the pure water of the Manasa-ganga here in billions of pots. In this way I will fill this lake with My own water and thus make its renown unequalled in the entire world.'"

krsnengitena sahasaitya samasta-tirtha-
sakhyas tadīya-saraso dhta-divya-murtih
tustava tatra vrsabhanu-sutam pranamya
bhaktya kstanjali-putah sravad-asra-dharah

"Lord Krishna then gestured to a heavenly personality who was an intimate associate of all the holy places. Suddenly that person rose up out of Krishna's pond and bowed down to the daughter of Sri Vrsabhanu [Radharani]. Then, with palms joined and tears pouring from his eyes, he began praying to Her in devotion."

devi tvadiya-mahimanam avaiti sarva
sastrartha-vin na ca vidhir na haro na laksmih
kintv eka eva purusartha-siromanis tvat-
prasveda-marjana-parah svayam eva krsnah

"'O goddess, even Lord Brahma himself, the knower of all scriptures, cannot understand Your glories, nor can Lord Siva or Laksmi. Only Krishna, the supreme goal of all human endeavour,

can understand them, and thus He feels obliged to personally make sure that You can wash away Your perspiration when You are fatigued.'"

yas caru-yavaka-rasena bhavat-padabjam
arajyaa nupuram aho nidadhati nityam
prapya tvadīya-nayanabja-tata-prasadam
svam manyate parama-dhanyatamam prahrsyan

tasyajnayaiva sahasa vayam ajagama
tat-parsni-ghata-krta-kunda-vare vasamah
tvam cet prasīdasi karosi krpa-kataksam
tarhy eva tarsa-vitapi phalito bhaven nah

"'He is always anointing Your lotus feet with nectarean *caru* and *yavaka* and decorating them with ankle bells, and He rejoices and feels most fortunate simply by satisfying the tips of the toes of Your lotus feet. On His order we have immediately come here to live in this most excellent pond, which He created by one stroke of His heel. But only if You now feel satisfied with us and bestow upon us Your merciful glance will the tree of our desire bear fruit.'"

srutva stutim nikhila-tirtha-ganasya tusta
praha sma tarsam ayi vedayateti radha
yama tvadīya-sarasim sa-phala bhavama
ity eva no vara iti prakatam tadocuh

"Hearing this prayer spoken by the representative of the full assembly of holy places, Sri Radha was pleased and said, 'So, kindly tell Me your desire.'

"They then told Her plainly, 'Our lives would be successful if we could come to Your pond. That is the benediction we desire.'"

agacchateti vrsabhanu-suta smitasya
provaca kanta-vadanabja-dhrtaksi-kona
sakhyo 'pi tatra krta-sammatayah sukhabdhau
magna virejur akhila sthira-jangamas ca

"Glancing at Her beloved from the corners of Her eyes, the daughter of Vrsabhanu replied with a smile, 'Please come.' Her gopi companions all agreed with Her decision and became immersed in the ocean of happiness. Indeed, the beauty of all creatures, both mobile and stationary, was enhanced."

prapya prasadam atha te vrsabhanujayah
sri-krsna-kunda-gata-tirtha-varah prasahya
bhittveva bhittim ati-vegata eva radha-
kundam vyadhuh sva-salilaih paripurnam eva

"Thus, gaining the grace of Srimati Radharani, the holy rivers and lakes in Sri Krishna-kunda forcibly broke through its boundary walls and swiftly filled Radha-kunda with their waters."

proce harih priyatame tava kundam etan
mat-kundato 'pi mahimadhikam astu loke
atraiva me salila-kelir ihaiva nityam
snanam yatha tvam asi tadvad idam saro me

“Lord Hari then said, ‘My dear Radha, may this pond of Yours become even more world-renowned than Mine. I will always come here to bathe and to enjoy My water pastimes. Indeed, this lake is as dear to Me as You are.’”

radhabravid aham api sva-sakhibhir etya
snasyamy arista-sata-mardanam astu tasya
yo ’riṣṭa-mardana-sarasy uru-bhaktir atra
snayad vasen mama sa eva maha-priyo ’stu

“Radha replied, ‘I will come to bathe in Your pond as well, even though You may kill hundreds of Arista demons here. In the future, anyone who has intense devotion for this lake, which is on the spot where You chastised Aristasura, and who bathes or resides here is sure to become very dear to Me.’”

rasotsavam prakurute sma ca tatra ratrau
krsnambudah krta-maha-rasa-harsa-varsah
sri-radhika-pravara-vidyud alaṅkṛta-sris
trailokya-madhya-vitati-krta-divya-kirtih

“That night Lord Krishna initiated a rasa dance at Radha-kunda, generating a torrent of the greatest mood of splendorous pleasure. Sri Krishna resembled a cloud, and Srimati Radharani a brilliant flash of lightning filling the sky with abundant beauty. In this way Their divine glories permeated the expanses of the three worlds.”

Narada Muni, being a great sage, understood that the killing of Arista more or less concluded the pastimes of Lord Krishna in Vrindavana. Therefore Narada, anxious to facilitate the transferal of Krishna’s pastimes to Mathura, approached Kamsa and addressed him as follows.

A short time later the great sage Narada Muni came to see King Kamsa. He informed the King that Krishna and Balarama were not Nanda’s sons but rather Vasudeva’s. It was out of fear of Kamsa that Vasudeva had put the two boys under Nanda’s care. Furthermore, said Narada, Kamsa would meet his death at Their hands. Kamsa shook with fear and anger when he heard all this, and in great agitation he began thinking of how to destroy Krishna and Balarama. He called for the demons Canura and Mustika and instructed them to kill the two brothers in a wrestling match. Then he spoke to Akrura, who was expert at executing his duties. Taking Akrura by the hand, Kamsa persuaded him to go to Vraja to bring the two boys to Mathura. Akrura agreed to carry out Kamsa’s order.

King Vajranabha establishes Lord Krishna’s pastime places

Gopala-campu by Srila Jiva Gosvami describes that Lord Krishna's great-grandson, Vajranabha, was especially entrusted with the most intimate service of reviving the spirit and the bhakti in Vrindavana. After Lord Krishna and Balarama concluded Their *prakata-lila*, the manifested pastimes in this world, Yudhisthira Maharaja and the Pandavas lost all their will to carry on. After some years, they retired from their service and went to the Himalayas searching for Krishna. Before Yudhisthira Maharaja left the world, he coronated Pariksit Maharaja as the emperor of the earth. And Yudhisthira Maharaja coronated Vajranabha as the king of Mathura. Lord Krishna's queen, Rukmini, gave birth to Pradyumna. Pradyumna married Mayavati. Their child was Aniruddha. Aniruddha married Usha. And the son of Usha and Aniruddha was Vajranabha. Vajranabha was born in Dvaraka. According to the *Skanda Purana*, Vajranabha also resides as the thunderbolt symbol on the sole of Lord Krishna's right foot. So literally, he is eternally residing on the lotus foot of Krishna. That is his eternal home.

Vajranabha was living in Mathura. One day, Pariksit Maharaja, the emperor, came down from Hastinapura to visit him and asked Vajranabha, "How is everything?" Vajranabha said, "The city of Mathura is flourishing, but the forest of Vraja is completely desolate. There is nothing there. There is literally no one there. Where have all the Vrajavasis gone?" Vajranabha was in a very, very deep, despondent, and pitiful state. Pariksit Maharaja invited one of the teachers of Nanda Maharaja to come. His name was Sandilya Muni. Sandilya Muni described that Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, came into this material world to manifest the eternal spiritual world and the most loving pastimes of the spiritual world. He manifested these pastimes even for ordinary people to see. But when He left, these pastimes, they are still happening, but no longer can any ordinary person see them. And therefore, what you see is a completely desolate, uninhabited forest. There was literally nothing there. Everything entered Lord Krishna's internal *lila*. Sandilya Muni told Vajranabha, it is your service to manifest the glories of Vrindavana once again. Everything will be revealed to you. It is your great-grandfather's wish.

Now, you install deities all around Vrindavana. You restore villages. You discover, reveal, and excavate the holy places of Lord Krishna's pastimes. And you revive the supreme spirit and culture of Vraja-bhakti. That is your mission. Then this great Muni Sandilya departed. Pariksit Maharaja told Vajranabha, any assistance you need, I will help you. And then he left. So, Vajranabha, from Mathura, he came back into the Vrindavana forest. And he walked around. And he searched. But there was no one to be found. It just looked like an ordinary forest. Kind of the way some of us may be seeing Vrindavana today with our mundane vision. But he didn't have mundane vision. He searched and searched and he prayed. But he felt himself hopeless and helpless. He came to the bank of Yamuna and sat under a *Kalpa-vriksha* tree. And there, in compassion for all living beings, and love for his great-grandfather, and all his devotees, he cried.

HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj in his lecture during Kartika Yatra 2025 to Govardhana says, "Actually, when I read this story in the Gopal-campu, I was remembering when A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada came to Butler, Pennsylvania, in New York City. And he was trying so hard to do the mission of his Guru Maharaja. But everything seemed to be failing. And it seemed so hopeless. And it seemed so helpless."

Similarly, as Vajranabha was crying under the *Kalpa-vriksha* tree, he heard a voice. The voice said, "Vrindavana will be revealed to you." At that moment, right before Vajranabha's eyes, the supreme full glory of the eternal spiritual world of Vrindavana was revealed to Vajranabha. And he excavated those sites and revealed them for ordinary people to see. This is what Sandilya Muni requested Vajranabha to accept as his life and soul: make Vrindavana a place of pilgrimage for all ordinary people from all places to come and feel Krishna's presence and cultivate Krishna's devotional service.

He installed many, many deities. Sixteen were prominent:

- *four Devas, namely Sri Govinda-deva (currently in Jaipur), Sri Hari-deva (currently in Budhauli near Kanpur), Sri Bala-deva (Gokula), and Sri Adi-kesava-deva (originally installed at Sri Krishna Janmasthana at Mathura and later moved to Rasdhan near Kanpur);*
- *four Mahadevas, namely Sri Gopesvara Mahadeva (Vrindavana), Bhutesvara Mahadeva (Mathura), Kamesvara Mahadeva (Kamyavana), and Cakalesvara Mahadeva (Govardhana);*
- *four Devis, namely Sri Vrinda-devi (Kamyavana), Sri Yogamaya-devi (near Chaumuhan), Sri Patala-devi (Gokula), and Sri Manasi-devi (Govardhana);*
- *and he installed two Nathas, Gopinatha and Srinatha, and two Gopalas, Sri Madana-gopala (Jaipur) and Sakshi-gopala (who was moved to Odisha).*

He also installed many, many other deities, but these were prominent in each direction of *Vraja-bhumi*. What Vajranabha did was restore the folklore of Vrindavana as a place of

pilgrimage for all time to come. Vajranabha excavated many *kundas* and built stone *ghatas* around both *Radha-kunda* and *Syama-kunda*. He restored them so that Vrindavana was again the most beautiful, spiritually charged place of love and devotion in the entire universe.

But after many thousands of years passed, approximately four thousand years, by the natural influence of time, almost all places were forgotten. And it was at that time that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to Vrindavana. One of Lord Caitanya's great missions was to reveal the glories of Vrindavana to the world. When Lord Caitanya took initiation in Gaya from Srila Isvarapuri, immediately after initiation He was running to come to Vrindavana. But demigods spoke from the sky and said, "You have a mission to establish the Harinama Sankirtana movement. That is why You incarnated. You can go to Vrindavana later." So, He went to Navadvipa and established the Harinama Sankirtana movement. After taking sannyasa, Lord Caitanya went to Puri, but still, one of the greatest passions of His mission was to re-establish Vrindavana as a holy place of pilgrimage. He instructed Sri Rupa Gosvami and Sri Sanatana Gosvami and entrusted them to go to Vrindavana and live there for the rest of their lives to establish temples, daily deity worship, to discover the lost ancient deities that Vajranabha had installed 4500 years before, to rediscover and excavate the holy places, to write Vaisnava literatures extracting the essence of all Vedas, and to establish pure devotional service in Vrindavana as the topmost *prema*, or love of God, and by their own behaviour and character to demonstrate the qualities of a devotee.

Glories of Sri Radha-kunda

In *Upadesamrta*, The Nectar of Instruction book, Texts 9 to 11, Srila Rupa Gosvami describes the glories of Sri Radha-kunda as follows: *"The super-excellent Sri Radha-kunda stands supreme, for it is overflooded with the ambrosial nectarean prema of the Lord of Gokula, Sri Krishna. Where, then, is that intelligent person who is unwilling to serve this divine Radha-kunda, which is situated at the foot of Govardhana Hill?" (Text 9)*

"Among the gopis, Srimati Radharani is the most dear to Lord Krishna. Her kunda [lake] is as profoundly dear to Lord Krishna as this most beloved of the gopis. Who, then, will not reside at Radha-kunda and, in a spiritual body surcharged with ecstatic devotional feelings [aprakrta-bhava], render loving service to the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, who perform Their asta-kaliya-lila, Their eternal eightfold daily pastimes. Indeed, those who execute devotional service on the banks of Radha-kunda are the most fortunate people in the universe." (Text 10)

"Of the many objects of favoured delight and of all the lovable damsels of Vraja-bhumi, Srimati Radharani is certainly the most treasured object of Krishna's love. And, in every respect, Her divine kunda is described by great sages as similarly dear to Him. Undoubtedly Radha-kunda is very rarely attained even by the great devotees; therefore, it is even more difficult for ordinary devotees to attain. If one simply bathes once within those holy waters, one's pure love of Krishna is fully aroused." (Text 11)

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami offers the following sublime prayers to Sri Radha-kunda and Sri Syama-kunda:
vraja-bhuvana-sudhamsoh prema-bhumir nikamam
vraja-madhura-kisori-mauli-ratna-priyeva
paricitam api namna ya ca tenaiva tasyas
tad ati-surabhi radha-kundam evasrayo me

"The moon of Vraja Sri Krishna, who loves that supremely enchanting kunda as much as the girl who is the abode of love and the crown-jewel among the sweet youthful damsels of Vraja, has made that kunda known by Her name. may that very fragrant Radha-kunda be my only shelter." *(Sri Radha-kundastakam, 4 of Stavavali)*

sri-vrnda-vipinam suramyam api tac chriman sa govardhanah
sa rasa-sthalikapy alam rasamayi kim tavad anyat sthalam
yasyapy amsa-lavena narhati manak samyam va mukundasya tat
pranebhyo 'py adhika-priyeva dayitam tat kundam evasraye

"The supremely charming Vrindavana forest, the most resplendent Govardhana, and even the rasa-laden arena of the rasa dance, what to speak of any other places of Lord Krishna's pastimes, are not equal to even a particle of Sri Radha-kunda. I take shelter of that Radha-kunda, which is as dear to Mukunda as His dear beloved Srimati Radhika Herself." *(Sri Vraja-vilasa-stava, 53 of Stavavali)*

dustarista-vadhe svayam samudabhut krsnanghri-padmad idam
sphitam yan makaranda vistrtir ivaristakhyam istam sarah
sopanaih pariranjitam priyataya sri radhaya karitaih
premnalingad iva priya sara idam tan nitya nityam bhaje

"Just as nectar trickles from a blooming lotus flower, when the demon Aristasura was killed, the nectarean Sri Syama-kunda sprang from Sri Krishna's lotus feet. Lovingly decorated with steps by Srimati Radhika Herself, Syama-kunda forever embraces my most beloved Sri Radha-kunda. I always worship that Syama-kunda, which is non-different from Syama Himself." *(Sri Vraja-vilasa-stava, 58 of Stavavali)*

Eight Main Kunjas Surrounding Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda

In *aprakata-lila*, surrounding both Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda, are the Kunjas (garden groves) of the *asta-sakhis* – the eight principal *sakhis* of Srimati Radharani and the *asta-sakhas* – the eight principal sakhas (cowherd boyfriends) of Lord Sri Krishna, called *priya-narma-sakhas*. Located in specific directions, these kunjas are designed for Sri Sri Radha and Krishna's pleasure, featuring unique colours, flowers, and personal areas.

Bhakti-ratnakara (Fifth Wave) describes:
sri-radhika-kunda sarva-dike nirupama
lalitadi astasakhi-kunja manorama
subaladi-kunja syama-kunda-sarvadike
donhe vilasaye ati asesa visese

"Radha-kunda is most beautifully surrounded by the kunjas of the eight sakhis beginning with Lalita's. Syama-kunda is surrounded by the kunjas of the eight sakhas beginning with Subala's. The Divine Couple perform very special loving pastimes here."

Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami describes each of these *kunjas* in *Sri Govinda-lilamrta*. The eight *kunjas* of the eight principal *sakhis* at Radha-kunda are:

1. *Lalitanandada-kunja of Lalita sakhi (North):* This kunja is the largest of them all and is lightning-coloured kunja. This place, which gives joy to Lalita, has in the centre a splendid royal lotus shaped pavilion for Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, along with Their associates. All around Lalita's kunja, are several similar kunjas. In the southwest corner of Lalita's kunja, there is an astonishing, gem-studded lotus temple called "Padma-mandira". From the very high turret of this temple, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna happily behold the beauty of the forest. There are platforms made of gold, sapphires, crystal, and lapis lazuli. In the southeastern corner of Lalita's kunja is a jewelled lotus-shaped swing named Madanandolana, hanging from the two Bakula trees.

2. *Visakhanandada-kunja of Visakha Sakhi (Northeast):* This kunja is also known as Madana-sukhada-kunja (giving joy to Cupid). This kunja consists of different types of multicoloured

campaka, madhavi, and lotus flowers, as well as different birds and bees of all colours. The fragrance of the different coloured flowers impedes all other smells and spreads pleasure everywhere. It is a cloud-coloured kunja featuring intimate pleasure bowers.

3. *Citranandala-kunja of Citra Sakhi (East):* On the eastern shore of Radha-kunda is Citra Sakhi's wonderful Citranandala-kunja. It is a "variegated" multi-coloured, wonderful grove with diverse flowers. This kunja has attractive form, having a variety of colours, with trees, creepers, birds, and bees of various colours. The centre is decorated with colourful jewels and surrounded by courtyards, platforms, and swings.

4. *Indulekha-sukha-prada or Purnendu (full moon) kunja of Indulekha Sakhi (Southeast):* In the southeast comer lies Indulekha Sakhi's kunja, named Purnendu (full moon) or Indulekha-sukha-prada (giving joy to Indulekha), where everything is white like the moon. This white-coloured kunja is made of moonstone and crystal, featuring white cottages and flowers. There are white lotuses, white waterlilies, white jasmines, vines and trees with white leaves and flowers. The bees, kokilas, and parrots are also white and only distinguishable by their sounds. On the night of the full moon, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna along with Their associates, dressed in white cloth, perform pastimes here. If anyone suddenly comes here, They are unable to see them in the white ambience.

5. *Campakalatanandada or Hema-kunja of Campakalata Sakhi (South):* This is a golden-coloured kunja that adds to the aesthetic beauty. Everything here is golden, such as the creepers, flowers, lotuses, courtyards, platforms, swings, paraphernalia, birds, and bees. When Srimati Radharani enters this place wearing yellow ornaments, cosmetics, and garments, even Sri Krishna cannot recognize Her. When Sri Krishna dresses His whole body in yellow to listen secretly to the discussions of His beloved with Her friends, no one can recognize that Krishna is present. When Jatila is sometimes sent here by Padma, she cannot see Radharani, but only Krishna, even though They are sitting together on one seat. Here is situated Campakalata's kitchen and a dining table for Radha and Krishna. Campakalata, the cooking acarya, sometimes blissfully arranges with Vrinda-devi for Radha and Krishna to eat together here.

6. *Syama-kunja of Rangadevi Sakhi (Southwest):* This Syama-blue kunja is popular for being Srimati Radharani's favourite, because the dark blue colour of everything reminds Her of Lord Krishna. The platforms and courtyards in the bower are studded with blue sapphires. There are black creepers clinging to blackish *tamala* tree. This dark blue kunja increases Radhika's ecstasy, reminding Her of Her beloved Syamasundara. When elders like Mukhara come here, they are unable to see Sri Krishna, but only Radha, though They are sitting together. Rangadevi has a sweet and charming personality, full of playful gestures and captivating glances. She is irresistibly humorous and loves to joke with her dearest friend Srimati Radharani in the presence of Sri Krishna. She carefully looks after the comfort of Radha and Krishna, keeping Them cool in the summer by fanning with devotion. She also directs the sakhis who paint Their limbs with fragrant flower designs made of candana. *(Radha-Krishna-ganoddessa-dipika)*

7. *Tungavidyanandada-kunja of Tungavidya Sakhi (West):* It is a crimson-coloured grove decorated with rubies.

8. *Vasanta-sukhada-kunja of Sudevi Sakhi (Northwest):* On the north-western corner of Radha-kunda lies Sri Sudevi's kunja, known as Vasanta-sukhada, the giver of joy to spring. It is a green-coloured kunja recognized for emerald platforms and intimate sites. Sri Sri Radha and Krishna lovingly feed the parrots with pomegranate seeds and grapes brought by Vrinda-devi, offering the fruits with Their own hands. After showing mercy to the parrots, They enter the graceful pavilion of the kunja, where Radha sits with Her sakhis and Krishna with His

friends, joyfully playing dice together. *(Sri Govinda-lilamrta)* Sudevi is gentle and charming, always remaining close to Srimati Radharani. She decorates Radha's hair with pearls and flowers, applies kajal to Her eyes, and anoints Her with fragrant perfumes. She also lovingly brings water to Radhika whenever She is thirsty. Fond of the creatures of Vrindavana, Sudevi especially cares for the birds. She trains the parrots to sing the glories of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna and to carry messages between Them. *(Radha-Krishna-ganiddesa-dipika)*

9. *Ananga Manjari's Kunja* is located in the centre of the Radha-kunda. It is connected to the north bank of Radha-kunda by a crystal bridge. The north bank is where Jahnava's Ma's sitting place is located. Ananga Manjari kunja is abundant with lotuses, bees, and swans, studded with emeralds, rubies, and moonstones. Its surface abounds with wave-like patterns, such that others mistake this for real water. This kunja, in the shape of a sixteen petalled lotus, is approached by a charming bridge from the north side. It has a chamber called Salila Kamala (Water Lotus). The bower gives happiness to Ananga-manjari.

Kunjas of the Eight Sakhas: Similarly, Syama-kunda is surrounded by the *kunjas* of the eight main *priya-narma-sakhas*, Subala, Madhumangala, Ujjvala, Arjuna, Gandharva, Vidagdha, Bhrnga, Kokila, Daksa, and Sannandana. They have their *kunjas* in different directions. These sakhas are Lord Krishna's most intimate cowherd boyfriends, and they understand and are submissive to Lord Krishna's dealing with the *gopis*. They have offered their *kunjas* to the *gopis*.

1. *Subalanandada-kunja of Subala Sakha (northwest):* This kunja is on the side of Syama-kunda where Manasa-pavana-ghata is located. It is managed by Srimati Radharani. Every day, Sri Radha very eagerly bathes here with Her sakhis bathe at 12 noon. The water is as sweet as the honey of Lord Krishna's lotus feet and is as dear to them as Lord Krishna.

2. *Madhumangala-sanda kunja of Madhumangala (north):* It is accepted by Lalita Sakhi and is very dear to Srimati Radharani.

3. *Ujjvalanandada-kunja of Ujjvala Sakha (northwest):* It is accepted by Visakha Sakhi.

4. *Arjunanandada-kunja of Arjuna Sakha (east):* It is accepted by Citra Sakhi.

5. *Gandharvanandada-kunja of Gandharva Sakha (southeast):* It is accepted by Indulekha Sakhi.

6. *Vidagdhandada-kunja of Vidagdha Sakha (south):* It is accepted by Campakalata Sakhi.

7. *Kokilandada-kunja of Kokila Sakha (southwest):* It is accepted by Ranga Sakhi.

8. *Sannandanandada-kunja of Sanandananda Sakha (west):* It is accepted by Tungavidya Sakhi.

Praying to these sacred *kunjas*, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami writes:
tata-madhura-nikunjah klpta-namana uccair
nija-parijana-vargaih samvibhajyasritas taih
madhukara-ruta-ramya yasya rajanti kamyas
tad ati-surabhi radha-kundam evasrayo me

"On the shore of Radha-kunda are many splendid, charming kujas each named after Sri Radha's main friends and filled with the sweet humming sounds of bumblebees. May that very fragrant Radha-kunda be my only shelter." *(Sri Radha-kundastakam, 6 of Stavavli)*

Description of Sri Radha-kunda in the Spiritual World

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura gives a description of Radha-kunda in his book, *Gita Mala*. The banks of Radha-kunda are made of desire-fulfilling touchstones. There are hundreds of beautiful transcendental gardens surrounding the lake. The trees and creepers of the gardens are made of coral and rubies and the fruits they produce are pearls and diamonds. Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami in his *Sri Govinda-lilamrita*, and Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti in his *Sri Krishna Bhavanamrita* describe Radha-kunda in the spiritual world. On the four sides of Radha-kunda are jewelled stairways leading to jewelled bathing *ghatas*. A jewelled bridge connects Radha-kunda with Syama-kunda. On either side of the *ghatas* are pairs of swings. There are jewelled platforms around the stairs of the *ghatas*, flanking gem-studded cottages. There are many shade trees and flowering creepers. These flowering creepers have unlimited flowers. On all side of Radha-kunda are *kalpa-viksa* (wish-fulfilling) trees. The bathing *ghatas* are surrounded by various *kunjas* (forest groves or gardens).

Excavation of Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda by Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami

Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu sent many of His seniormost followers to the transcendental land of Vrindavana, for the purpose of excavating the lost sites of Lord Krishna's pastimes, establishing Deity worship and also writing books on devotional service. Prominent amongst them were the Six Gosvamis of Vrindavana, namely the two brothers Rupa and Sanatana, Gopala Bhatta, Raghunatha Bhatta, Jiva and Raghunatha dasa. Having spent eight long years serving Lord Caitanya at Puri, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami arrived in Vrindavana just after Lord Caitanya concluded His manifest pastimes, which occurred in the year 1534. Feeling intense separation from the Lord, Raghunatha dasa had decided to end his life by throwing himself down from the top of Govardhana Hill. But first he desired to have darsana of both Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami in Vrindavana. Seeing Raghunatha's sorrowful condition, Rupa and Sanatana consoled him and, accepting him as their third brother, requested him to spend the rest of his life performing *bhajana* at Radha-kunda.

Srila Rupa and Sanatana had reasoned that since Lord Caitanya had previously given His own *Govardhana-sila* to Raghunatha, along with His set of *gunja-mala*, sacred to Srimati Radharani, this was surely a sign that the Lord desired Raghunatha to live near Govardhana Hill and worship Radha-kunda. The Gosvamis decided to appoint Raghunatha as the custodian of Radha-kunda and *acarya* for all those who wish to reside on her sacred banks. Following the advice of Rupa and Sanatana, Raghunatha went to live near the sacred lakes and regularly circumambulated Govardhana Hill. Some years later, while performing his *bhajana* on the banks of Radha-kunda, the idea of enlarging the *kundas* and building steps around them entered Raghunatha's mind. At that time, the two sacred *kundas* were just muddy pools of water about twelve feet in diameter, in the middle of two paddy fields. Devotees wishing to take a holy dip had to wade through ankle-deep mud to get there. Raghunatha visualised that in the future, thousands of pilgrims would flock to Radha-kunda to take a holy bath and therefore, to enlarge the *kundas* seemed a good idea. Raghunatha then considered how much money he would require for excavation of the *kundas*, but then suddenly condemned himself for allowing such thoughts about money to enter his mind and distract his *bhajana*. With increased determination, he again absorbed himself in meditation on the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna.

Purity is the force, and Lord Krishna reciprocates based on our purity and surrender. Lord Krishna knew the desire of His intimate associate. That very same day, over one thousand miles away at Badrikasrama in the Himalayas, a wealthy merchant named Samarpan was on his way to give a large donation to the deity of Lord Badri-Narayana. That night in a dream, Lord Badri-Narayana came before the merchant and ordered him to give the donation to a devotee living at Radha-kunda by the name of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, saying that the donation should be used as Raghunatha desired.

Early next morning, the merchant awoke in an ecstatic mood having had darsana of Lord Badri-Narayana in his dream and immediately started for Vrindavana. On reaching the holy land, Samarpan soon located Raghunatha dasa, who was sitting on the banks of Radha-kunda absorbed in his *bhajana*. After offering his respects, Samarpan handed the large donation of money to Raghunatha dasa, who at first flatly refused to accept it. After hearing the merchant's dream, completely astonished at the ways of the Lord, Raghunatha relented and accepted the donation with humble gratitude. Raghunatha dasa immediately called for Jiva Gosvami to come from Vrindavana and asked him to purchase the two paddy fields where Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda were situated. On arriving at Radha-kunda, Jiva Gosvami purchased the two paddy fields in the name of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. This event occurred in the year 1545. Work then started on the excavation of Radha-kunda under the personal supervision of both Raghunatha and Jiva. During the digging, Raghunatha dasa discovered beautiful Deities of Radha and Krishna buried in the mud. Raghunatha handed the Deities over to a local brahmana to worship and a temple was soon constructed on the western bank of Radha-kunda. These were the first Deities to be installed at Radha-kunda, and the temple became known as the Purana (meaning old) Radha-Krishna Mandira.

Further excavation revealed the original kunda known as *Kancana-kunda*, created by Srimati Radharani and the *gopis*. The Bengali word *kancana*, or *kankan* in Hindi, means bangle, which was used by Srimati Radharani to dig Radha-kunda. Around this original kunda Raghunatha dasa had steps built on all four sides. Some years later in 1591, the king of Jaipur, Raja Mansingh, after completing the construction of the Govindaji Mandira in Vrindavana, came to Radha-kunda and constructed more steps above the ones built by Raghunatha dasa. Raja Mansingh also built a canal linking Syama-kunda with *Lalita-kunda*, for the purpose of maintaining the water level of the *kundas*. Then in the year 1817, a wealthy landlord from Kolkata, Lal Babu, who later entered the renounced order, constructed even more steps around the *kundas.* When Radha-kunda is periodically emptied for cleaning, *Kancana-kunda*, created by Srimati Radharani and the *gopis*, can be clearly seen, as well as the steps around the *kundas* that were constructed by Raghunatha dasa Gosvami.

As recently as 1941, when Radha-kunda was completely emptied for cleaning, natural springs were seen bubbling water from beneath the ground. These springs are the holy places called by Lord Krishna to fill the *kundas*, and these holy places have now taken the form of natural springs in order to continue their service to Srimati Radharani. Devotees also saw some springs emitting a thick milky white substance which is Krishna-sagara, the milk ocean, who also appeared here by the order of Lord Krishna and helped fill the *kundas*. On some days, one can clearly see milky white patches within the sacred waters of Radha-kunda. On rare occasions, the waters of Radha-kunda appear almost completely white, due to large volumes of milk being released by the spring below. After completing the excavation of Radha-kunda, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami turned his attention to Syama-kunda, with the idea of making it in the same square shape as Radha-kunda. This could not be done unless a number of trees were cut down, and it was decided to start the work the very next day. That night in a dream, the five Pandavas, headed by Maharaja Yudhisthira, came before Raghunatha and explained that he and the other Pandavas were living in those trees and performing *bhajana* on the banks of Syama-kunda. The next morning before work began, Raghunatha instructed the workers that no trees should be cut down and only the vacant area should be used to dig the kunda. This accounts for the unusual irregular shape of Syama-kunda. During the excavation of Syama-kunda, the original kunda created by Lord Krishna's right heel was discovered. Encircling this original kunda were the stone steps built almost five thousand years earlier by King Vajranabha and known as Vajra-kunda.

After the excavation work was completed in the year 1554, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami continued to perform his *bhajana* on the banks of the sacred *kundas*, right up until his disappearance in the year 1583. Raghunatha dasa personally set the highest example of

renunciation expected for all those who wish to reside on the banks of Radha-kunda. On the *Vijaya-dasami* day, in the year 1576, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami handed over charge of Radha-kunda to Jiva Gosvami, who became the next *mahanta*. Krishna dasa *brahmacari*, a disciple of Jiva Gosvami, became the next *mahanta* after the disappearance of Jiva in 1608. The line of *mahantas* of Radha-kunda is continuing even up to the present day. The original land deed and letter of appointment given to Jiva by Raghunatha dasa Gosvami still exist.

What does it mean by bathing at Radha-kunda
In 1936, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, the illustrious founder of the Gaudiya Matha, led a one thousand strong parikrama party on the Vraja Mandala Parikrama. When they arrived at Radha-kunda, out of great reverence for the sacred kunda, they did not take bath but simply sprinkled three drops of water on their heads, which, according to the Vedas, is equal to bathing, while at the same time showing the utmost respect for Srimati Radharani's sacred kunda. What does it mean to bathe in Radha-kunda? Sri Radha-kunda is Srimati Radharani Herself, who has melted into the form of Sri Radha-kunda in Her ecstasy of love for Sri Krishna. This subject matter is the ultimate spiritual concept. In fact, it is the highest principle and the highest abode of the spiritual world. Lord Sri Krishna Himself has personally acclaimed that Sri Radha-kunda is non-different from Srimati Radharani and is as dear to Him as Srimati Radharani.

And anyone who bathes in the most holy of all holy waters of Sri Radha-kunda will be blessed with the love of Srimati Radharani. Do we have qualification to be here? Do we have qualification at all to even see Sri Syama-kunda or Radha-kunda? If we feel we do, that is our great misfortune and misconception. Do we have even the slightest qualification to touch these waters, what to speak of submerge our bodies in the liquid form of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna? The most profound Acaryas of all history-Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Rupa Gosvami, Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, what to speak of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself, they worship Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda as the holiest of all holy places.

By the mercy of our beloved Guru Maharaja, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, by the blessings of the Vaisnavas who are following his footsteps, we are being granted causeless mercy to come here and take the instruction of Srila Rupa Gosvami into our hearts to bathe in Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda. What does it mean to bathe in Syama-kunda and Radha-kunda? Srila Rupa Gosvami describes in his *Upadesamrta* the whole process by which we become spiritually purified. To bathe is not only the matter of placing the body into these holy waters, but it is submerging our consciousness utterly in the humble prayer for Sri Radharani and Sri Krishna's mercy. To bathe in Syama-kunda and Radha-kunda is an act which should express our inner heart's desire to surrender our lives to the process of devotional service, to submerge our very existence in the loving service of Sri Sri Radha Krishna and all associates. But some of us in our state of consciousness, we are not even able to adjust our minds to that conception. Thus we approach Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda, falling into an ocean of humility, begging, make clear of the mind, begging Srimati Radharani and Lord Sri Krishna, Sri Guru and Gauranga, for their causeless mercy, to encourage us eternally in the service of the service of the service, as the servant of the servant of their servants, begging for a pure heart free of ego, begging to taste the drop of pure love and devotion.

Lord Caitanya taught us that the chanting of the holy names can grant us all of these benedictions. In our bath in Sri Radha-kunda and Sri Syama-kunda, let us be very sincere, very prayerful, begging for a taste to chant the holy names, begging for the eternal service of the Lord and His devotees. If we can bathe in Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda in this prayerful consciousness, appealing for pure devotion, then by the mercy of Sri Sri Radha and Syamasundara, our prayer will certainly be fulfilled. Sri Syama-kunda, Sri Radha-kunda ki jai.
[HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj Kartika Yatra 1998]

Meeting of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and Srila Prabhupada at Radha-kunda

For the devotees of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda are highly significant. At one time, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was on *parikrama* at Radha-kunda. At that time, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada also came to Radha-kunda to meet his spiritual master. While they were walking on the Sangam Ratna-vedi *(Yugala-sangam-ghata)* in this very place, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura told Srila Prabhupada, *"If you ever get money, print books."* The order for book distribution was given right at this very spot.

Around Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda, there are many important temples and places to visit. Many of our Vaisnava *acaryas*, including Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura and others, spent a significant amount of time at Radha-kunda. Sri Madhavendra Puri, Lord Nityananda Prabhu, Sri Vakresvara Pandita, Sri Narahari Sarkara, Sri Jahnava Ma Thakurani, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, Srila Jiva Gosvami, Srila Lokanatha dasa Gosvami, Srinivasa Acarya, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, and A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada also spent time there.

1. Sangam Ratna-vedi (Yugala-sangam-ghata)

Sangam Ratna-vedi, also called *Yugala-sangam-ghata*, is the meeting place (sangam) of the two sacred *kundas* of the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha Krishna, in Their liquid forms. The meeting place of the two *kundas* is also known as Ratna-vedi, which means jewelled altar. On the transcendental plane, this Ratna-vedi is a gem-studded bridge across the sangam. As super excellent Sri Radha-kunda is the most sacred of all places, this spot known as Ratna-vedi is the epitome of devotion to Lord Sri Krishna and Srimati Radharani and is therefore also known as the Radha-kunda Yogapitha. The bathing *ghatas* on both sides of Ratna-vedi are known as the *Yugala-sangam-ghata*. Right underneath the white dome at the Sangam is where Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda meet. If one looks closely, one can see small slits in the stone steps below *Carana-cinha* that allows the waters of the two sacred *kundas* to flow into one another. At Ratna-vedi, we can have the *darsana* of a huge collection of Govardhana-silas. During the day, abhiseka is performed and, in the evening, Ratna-vedi is bedecked with enchanting decorations of Govardhana-sila. The darsana of this Govardhana-sila is extremely beautiful to behold. *Kankana-kunda* in the middle is visible only when Radha-kunda is emptied for cleaning.

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami offers a very beautiful prayer to Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda Sangam:
nipais campaka-palibhir nava-varasokai rasalotkaraih
punnagair bakulair lavanga-latika vasantikabhir vrtaih
hrdyam tat-priya-kundayos tata-milan-madhya-pradesam param
radha-madhavayoh Priya-sthalam idam kelyas tad evasraye

"I take shelter of the transcendental central area dear to Sri Radha Madhava, where Their heart's favourite Sri Radha-kunda and Sri Syama-kunda meet. There the Divine Couple enjoy playful pastimes. It is very charming, being surrounded by *kadamba, campaka, newly grown asoka, mango, punnaga, and bakula trees, with lavanga* and *madhavi* vines." *(Sri Vraja-vilasa-stava, 52 of Stavavali)*

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura in Chapter 14 of *Sri Krishna-bhavanamrta* describes, *"Between the east and southeast of Radha-kunda is a golden bridge which connects it with Syama-kunda, the abode of all playful sports the kunjas that are accepted by the cowherd boys, like Subala. When lotus-eyed Krishna stood on this bridge with His dear ones, they saw*

that the peacocks were dancing on the shores with spread-out tails, and swans that were agitated with love pangs were singing in the water and swarms of bumblebees buzzed around in the sky." Sri Radha-Kunda is the supreme most holy of all holy places. There is no more sanctified abode in either the material or spiritual worlds. At this time, let us offer our most prostrated obeisances to Sri Syama-Kunda and Radha-Kunda, who are none different than the ecstatic, ambrosial liquid form of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna. And let us pray that we can be in a proper state of consciousness to give pleasure to the Supreme Lord.

Sangam Ratna-vedi, also called *Yugala-sangam-ghata*

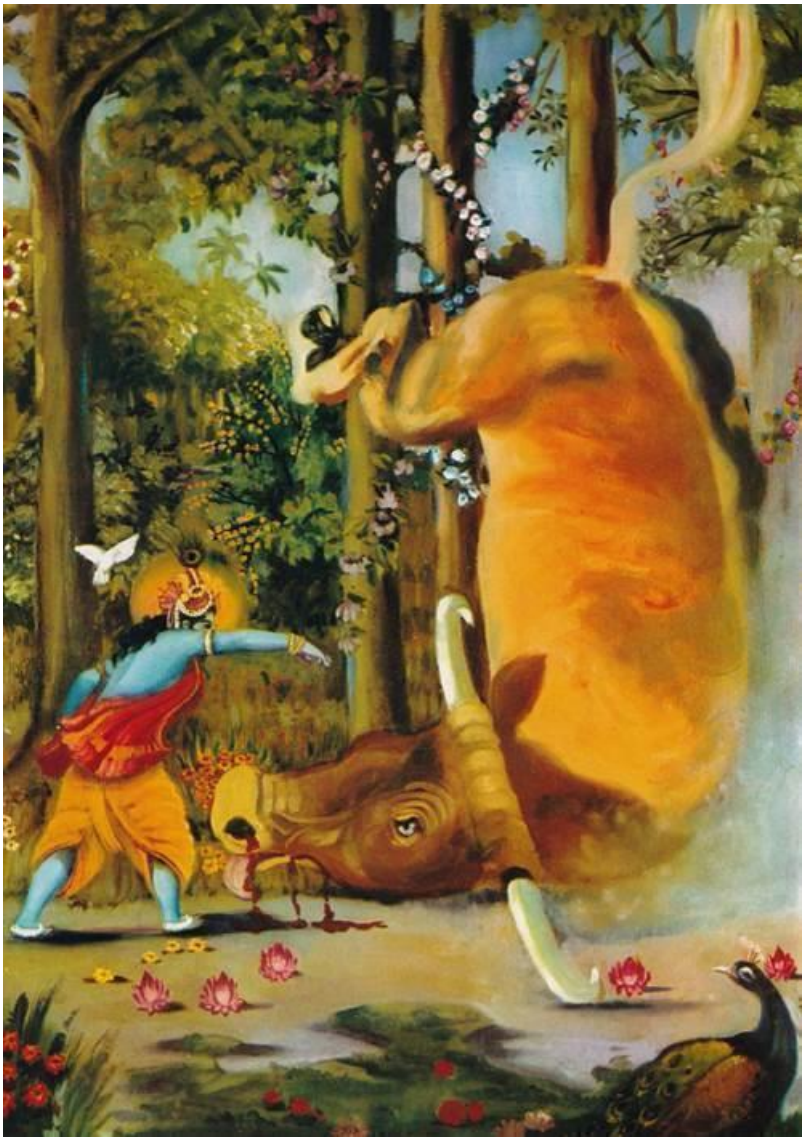
Govardhana-silas at Sangam Ratna-vedi

In the evening, Ratna-vedi is bedecked with enchanting decorations

Lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna at Sangam Ratna-vedi

View of Sri Radha-kunda in the morning after the Mangala-arati

The Gopis run from the demon Aristasura



Lord Krishna slays Aristasura

2. Jhulana-sthali (Swing pastime in the rainy season)

This stone structure shaped like an upside-down 'U' marks the place where Sri Sri Radha and Krishna enjoy Their rainy season swing pastimes (*jhulana-lila*). Under the banyan tree overlooking Sri Radha-kunda, there are three stone slabs honouring this *jhulana* pastime. The swing pastimes at this place are still being enacted on the spiritual plane as confirmed by all the Vaisnava *acaryas*. Five thousand years ago, King Vajranabha planted a banyan tree here but only the stump now remains; another banyan tree is now growing in its place. The *ghata* on this side of Radha-kunda is known as *Jhulana-ghata* after the pastime that takes place here.

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura in *Sri Krishna-bhavamrta* describes, in the *aprakata-lila*, or unmanifest pastimes, at this spot Vrinda-devi created an amazing swing shaped like a sixteen-petalled lotus flower hanging from the branch of a banyan tree. The Divine Couple Radha and Krishna sit in the middle of the lotus-shaped swing. The *asta-sakhis* and *asta-manjaris* also sit on the swing in a circle facing Them. The *sakhis* and *manjaris* saw Radha and Krishna are directly facing each of them simultaneously. The lotus swing is then pushed by another group of *sakhis* who also witness this astonishing pastime. One day, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna were wandering around Radha-kunda. Slowly They walked over the path shown by Vrinda-devi, bringing Them to the play forest named *Varsa-harsa*, the joy of the rainy season. Being defeated billions of times by Radha and Krishna, who were like lightening and a raincloud on the ground, the lightening and raincloud in the sky thought, "We are not qualified to stay above Radha and Krishna, but where shall we go? The entire heavens are pervaded by Their brilliant splendour." Thinking in this way, they trembled and became white from crying

drops of rain (like clouds at the end of the rainy season). They offered praise to Radha and Krishna with the soft, flattering voices of their rumbling. Sri Sri Radha and Krishna played in this Kadamba forest. The very long jewelled platforms between the Kadamba trees gave so much pleasure to Krishna. On each side of these platforms, there were two pillar-like trees standing with branches embracing each other. These extraordinary branches formed emerald canopies where flower garlands were hung. From these lovely branches, bright, red ropes inset with pearls were hanging, holding up many swings. Each swing had two golden seats that would swing gracefully in the soft breezes.

Jhulana-sthali

Jhulana-sthali

3. Sri Sri Radha Krishna Purana Mandira

When Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was excavating Radha-kunda, these old, beautiful Sri Sri Radha Krishna deities were discovered. Since They are the oldest Radha Krishna deities in Radha-kunda, the temple became known as Radha Krishna Purana Mandira. Enclosed by high walls, this was the first temple established here after Raghunatha dasa entrusted the worship of the deities to a local *brahmana*, who built the temple and whose descendants are still maintaining the worship. They are the predominant deities of Radha-kunda. In the courtyard of the temple, there is a banyan and a neem tree, entwined together. The Vrajavasis worship these trees as the manifestation of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna. This temple is a 2-minute walk from Jhulana-sthali.

Sri Sri Radha Krishna Purana Mandira

Banyan and a neem tree, entwined together in the courtyard of the temple

4. Sri Gopala Manipura Mandira

This temple was established around 1890 by the King of Manipura, Maharaja Churachand. The Sri Gopala deity was originally worshipped in the house of a *brahmana*. Once, Maharaja

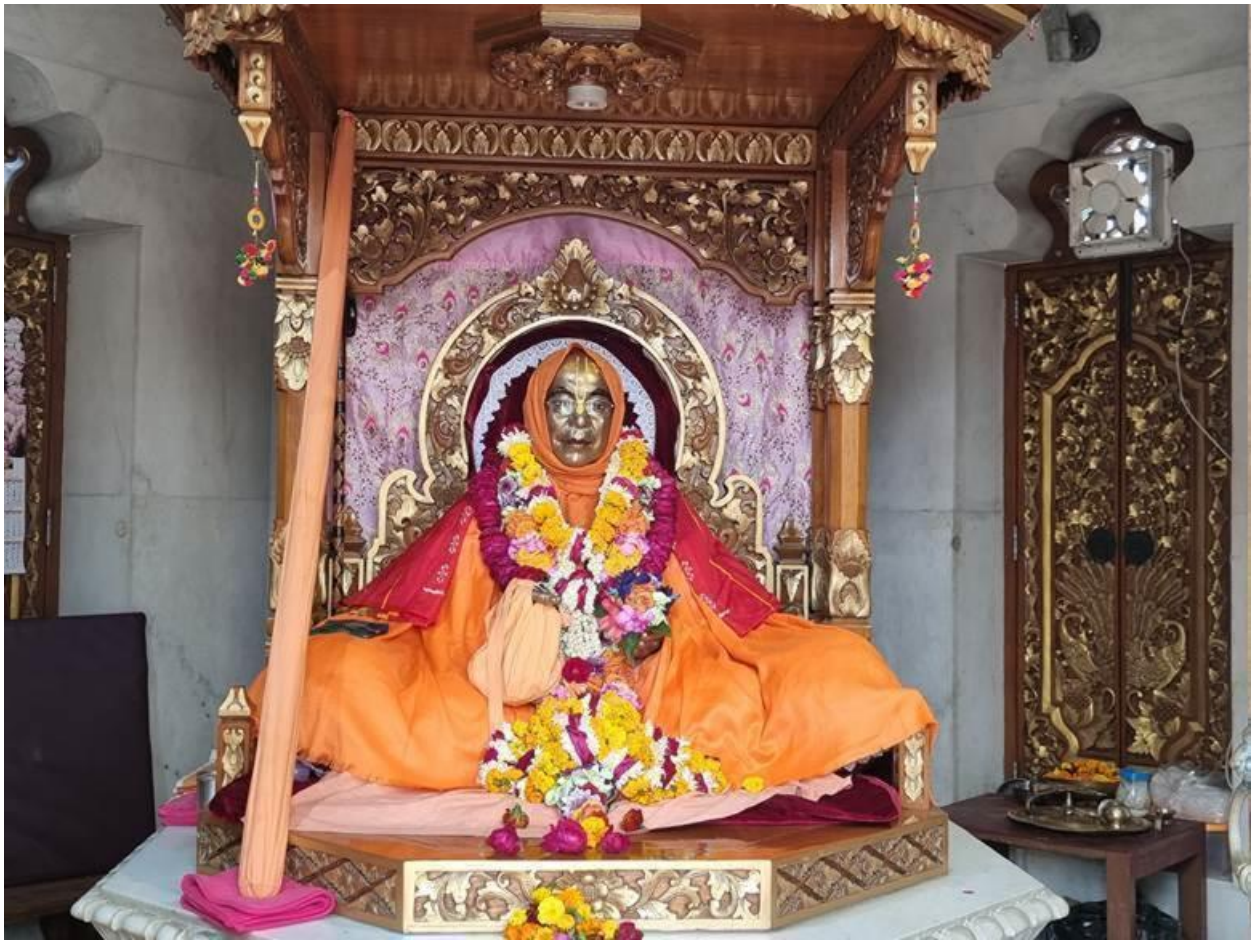
Churachand had a dream in which Gopala Ji appeared and ordered him to build a temple for Him in such a place that He could gaze at Radha-kunda as well as give darsana to Surya, the sun-god. The sun at Radha-kunda rises in the southeast, so the first rays strike the northwest corner. Thus, the King built a nice temple for Lord Gopala, located at the exact spot where the first rays of the rising sun appear at Radha-kunda. Visitors in the early morning can witness the rays of the rising sun fall directly on the lotus feet of Lord Gopala. On the altar, we can have the blessed *darsana* of Sri Gopalaji in the middle. On our right side is Sri Sri Radha Ramana, on the left side is Sri Radha Vinoda, and below is Patita-pavana Jagannatha. There is also a large gong here, which is the sign of a Manipuri temple. At all Manipuri temples, there are large gongs that make a very deep sound during the *arati*. Later, the King's descendants donated this beautiful sandstone temple to HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Maharaj, and it is now managed by devoted disciples of Maharaj.

The magnificent *samadhi mandira* of HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj is located behind the temple. It is constructed with white-carved marble in a unique and elegant Manipuri style with incredible carvings on the wooden doors. We can also have the darsana of Maharaj's personal room and paraphernalia at the temple. HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Maharaj was a dear-most servant of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a stalwart preacher in the scientific field. Maharaj dedicated every atom of his body to the service of scientific preaching. Srila Prabhupada was exceptionally pleased with him. When Maharaj left this world, the devotees brought his body to Sri Sri Krishna Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana. Then his disciples and assembled devotees brought his body here to this temple on the bank of Radha-kunda and placed him in *samadhi*. There are many Manipuri temples in Radha-kunda.

Sri Gopalaji in the middle. On our right side is Sri Sri Radha Ramana, on the left side is Sri Radha Vinoda, and below is Patita-pavana Jagannatha.

Magnificent *samadhi mandira* of HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Swami

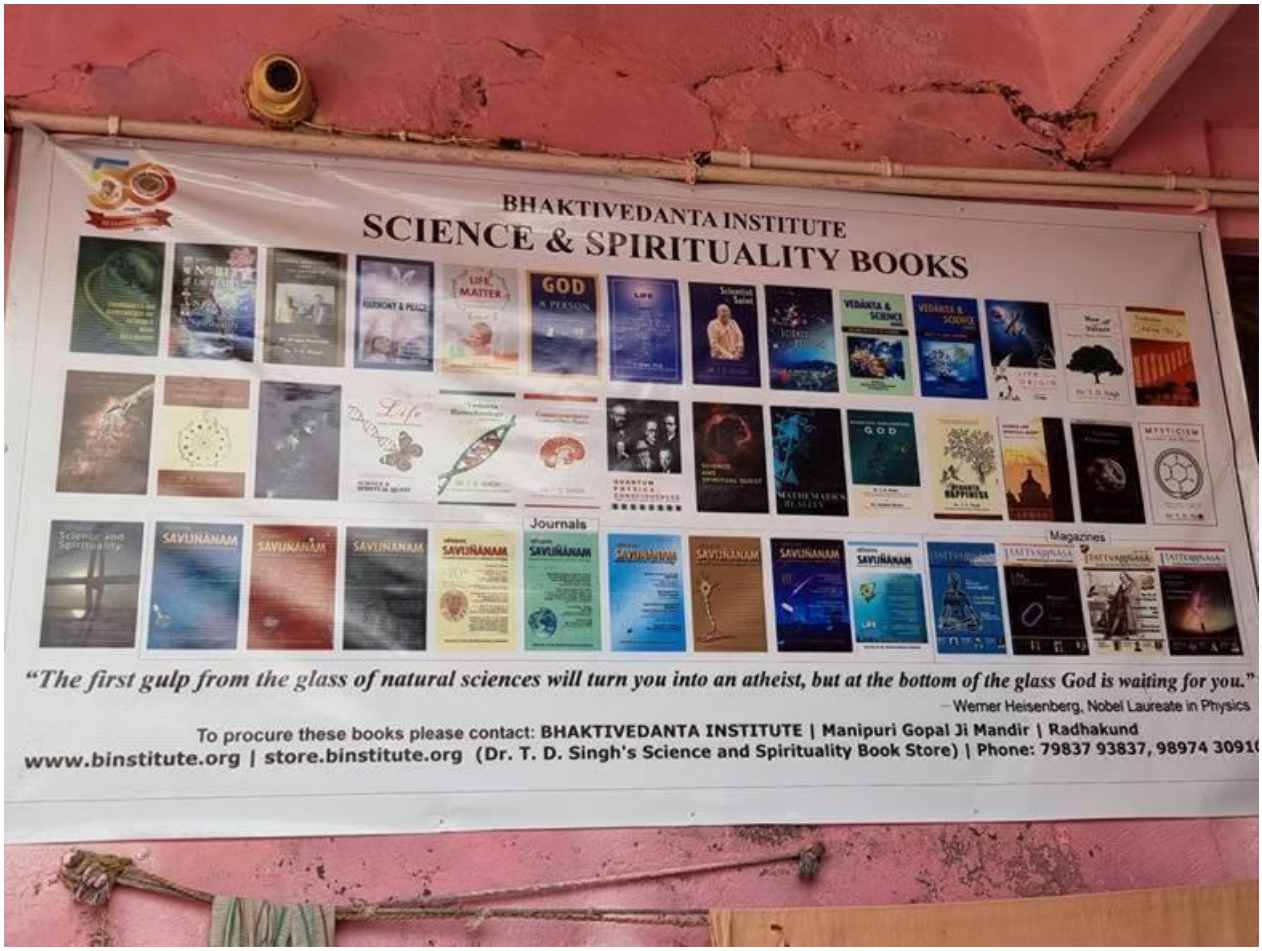
***Samadhi mandira* of HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj**



***Samadhi* of HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj**

Appreciations of Dr. T. D. Singh
Dr. Singh was an outstanding person and a good friend. ... Dr. Singh's contributions to the understanding of religion and the relation between science and religion have been important and will have a long-standing influence.
– Prof. Charles Townes
Nobel Laureate, USA
I thank God for Dr. Singh's work on the relationship of scientific and religious thinking, and pray that his efforts will continue to be fruitful in bringing greater peace and harmony to all.
– Prof. William D. Phillips
Nobel Laureate, USA
Dr. T. D. Singh represents for me a perfect role model how citizens and in particular academics should think, feel, and behave. He has been building bridges between groups of society and between different schools of thought. He has bridged the gaps between science and philosophy. He showed to us what true humanness is; he showed to us what wisdom and compassion really mean. Let us keep his spirit alive, let's not forget him as a role model, and improve our own being!
– Prof. Richard R. Ernst
Nobel Laureate, Switzerland
I had the lucky occasion to meet the spiritual leader Dr. T. D. Singh. ... I enjoyed his spiritual views based on traditional wisdom as well as his open-minded readiness to co-integrate on common grounds our knowledge and beliefs in order to improve our humble understanding of the great complexity of life.
– Prof. Werner Arber
Nobel Laureate, Switzerland
Dr. T. D. Singh
(H. H. Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swamiji)
Scientist and Saint
Pioneer of
Synthesis of Science & Spirituality
I very much enjoyed the meeting and discussion I had with Dr. Singh. ... It is heartening to know that his students and colleagues will endeavor to carry on his important vision of helping humanity through the interface of science and spirituality.
– Prof. Ahmed H. Zewail
Nobel Laureate, USA and Egypt
Dr. T. D. singh was a man of God. His work in promoting peace and conflict resolution is India and around the world was every bit as important as his work on religion and science. ... He carried a lot of burden that most of us chose simply to ignore, but also experienced joys that most of us can only imagine.
– William Grassie
Founder, Metanexus Institute, USA
He was not only a genuine leader. He has been a gift to many people in this world.
– Bishop William E. Swing
Founder of the
United Religions Initiative, USA
Swamiji was not just one man, but a procession of men. ... And he accomplished all of the above with a gentleness that is unbelievable. Truly, the elements were mixed in him with a rich and superlative beauty.
– Prof. Jagdish N. Srivastava
leading Statistician
Colorado State University, USA

HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj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HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Swami

Personal room and paraphernalia of HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Swami

5. Sri Jahnava-mata Baithaka

This platform jutting out into Radha-kunda is the sitting place of Ma Jahnava Thakurani, the consort of Lord Nityananda. She visited Radha-kunda around 1582, spending four days here.

After Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu concluded His manifest pastimes, all the Vaisnavas were plunged into great despair. They were suffering so much due to separation, especially here in Vraja-mandala. Ma Jahnava came from Bengal to comfort them. On arriving from Bengal, Ma Jahnava spent some days at Vrindavana. During her visit, she met Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, Srila Jiva Gosvami, and Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami. At that time, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, was living at Radha-kunda. He was in a very pitiable condition, due to intense feelings of separation after the disappearance of both Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis. He was fasting from grain and was very thin and weak and had no power to go to see her in Vrindavana. When Krsnadasa Kaviraja and others went to see Ma Jahnava, they conveyed dasa Gosvami's respect to her. Srila Jiva Gosvami requested her to go to Radha-kunda and give her *darsana* to Raghunatha dasa, as this would certainly inspire him to go on living.

Bhakti-ratnakara (Eleventh Wave) describes the meeting of Ma Jahnava and Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami: *"That illustrious personality, Ma Jahnava, glowed with a golden effulgence more brilliant than the sun. By the bank of Syama-kunda, dasa Gosvami was chanting very slowly. Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami came and informed him of Ma Jahnava's arrival. When Raghunatha dasa saw her coming, he went mad in ecstatic love. He cried so much that he lost sight of her. Ma Jahnava could understand by her spiritual vision, the inner heart of Raghunatha dasa. Tears of divine love rushed out of both their eyes just like well springs. Raghunatha dasa did not know what to say, or how to please Ma Jahnava, whose heart was burning like smouldering embers, in separation from her beloved consort, Lord Nityananda. Nobody has the power to describe their conversation. All the Gosvamis present there started shedding tears by this great meeting."* All the Vrajavasis came to take *darsana* of Isvari Ma Jahnava and all became very happy. With great care she cooked and offered *bhoga* to Lord Krishna and fed all the Vrajavasis and Vaisnavas. Everyone's happiness and *prema* was aroused when they honoured that prasadam. Out of respect for Ma Jahnava, the Vaisnavas made her a private bathing ghata. This is called *Jahnava-ghata*. Recently, this whole area of Ma Jahnava Baithaka has been beautifully renovated by a Filipino Babaji. He also nicely renovated the small shrine here commemorating her sitting place. On the wall, he was able to put a black marble plaque with gold letters stating how the work was done by the loving followers of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Sri Jahnava-mata Baithaka

Sri Jahnava-mata Baithaka

6. Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira

Adjacent to Sri Jahnava-mata Baithaka, around its corner, is Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira. One day during the noon time, while Ma Jahnava was sitting by the bank of Radha-kunda, she

heard the divine sound of a flute. She couldn't keep herself calm. She started looking here and there for the source of the sound. Suddenly, she saw Gopinatha standing in His threefold-bending form *(tri-bhanga-rupa)* under a *kadamba* tree. Sri Gopinatha's form was effulgent, and the beauty cannot be compared with millions of Cupids. He was smiling gently and playing His flute very sweetly. That sound of the flute was capable of making the entire universe restless. How could she keep her calm? She saw that Syamasundara was surrounded by none other than Srimati Radhika, Lalita, and the dear *sakhis*. Seeing that amazing scene, Ma Jahnava fainted. Since Sri Gopinatha appeared to her and gave her *darsana* right here on this divine spot, this Gopinatha Mandira has been established here. In this temple, on Lord Gopinatha's right side is Srimati Radharani, and on the left is *Ananga-manjari*. Ma Jahnava's Vraja form *is Ananga-manjari*.

Beautiful and blessed darsana from Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira
On Lord Gopinatha's right side is Srimati Radharani, and on the left is *Ananga-manjari*.

7. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami Samadhi

The *Samadhi Mandira* of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami is in front of the Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira. It is a white marble dome-like structure about 12 feet high. Affectionately known to all the Gaudiya Vaisnavas as *Dasa Gosvami*, he was one of the most intimate followers of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In the year 1583, after almost 48 years of performing *bhajana* on the banks of the sacred Radha-kunda, Raghunatha dasa entered *samadhi*. In those days of repressive Mughal rule, it was decided to cremate the sacred body of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, so that nobody in future would dig up his body and desecrate it. Srila Jiva Gosvami personally performed the last rites and had the sacred ashes of Raghunatha dasa placed in samadhi at this very spot, on the banks of Radha-kunda where he sat engaged in his *bhajana*. In the sacred memory of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, a twenty-four-hour *akhanda-kirtana* is being performed next to his samadhi. The *Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika* describes that

Raghunatha dasa is *Rasa-manjari* in Lord Krishna's pastimes. Sometimes it is said that he is *Rati-manjari*.

Samadhi of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami

Samadhi of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami

Devotees singing non-stop kirtana at the Samadhi Mandira of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami.

8. Sri Sri Radha Radha Kanta Mandira of Sri Vakresvara Pandita

Sri Sri Radha Radha Kanta Mandira is opposite Sri Gopala Manipura Mandira. On the altar are Sri Sri Radha Radha-kanta along with Lalita sakhi (left) and Lord Caitanya on the extreme left. There is also the *Puspa-samadhi* and *murti* of Sri Vakresvara Pandita on the outside of the main altar. Vakresvara Pandita was a close associate of Lord Caitanya. He was one of the chief dancers of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He could dance with constant ecstasy for 72 hours.

Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 10.17-20 describes: *Vakresvara Pandita, the fifth branch of the tree, was a very dear servant of Lord Caitanya's. He could dance with constant ecstasy for seventy-two hours. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu personally sang while Vakresvara Pandita danced, and thus Vakresvara Pandita fell at the lotus feet of the Lord and spoke as follows. "O Candramukha! Please give me ten thousand Gandharvas. Let them sing as I dance, and then I will be greatly happy." Lord Caitanya replied, "I have only one wing like you, but if I had another, certainly I would fly in the sky!"* In the *Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika (71)* it is stated that Vakresvara Pandita was an incarnation of Aniruddha, one of the quadruple expansions of Visnu (Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Aniruddha and Pradyumna). He could dance wonderfully for seventy-two continuous hours. When Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu played in dramatic performances in the house of Srinivasa Pandita, Vakresvara Pandita was one of the chief dancers, and he danced continuously for that length of time. Sri Govinda dasa, an Oriya devotee of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, has described the life of Vakresvara Pandita in his book *Gaura-krsnodaya*. There are many disciples of Vakresvara Pandita in Orissa, and they are known as Gaudiya Vaisnavas although they are Oriyas. Among these disciples are Sri Gopalaguru and his disciple Sri Dhyanacandra Gosvami.

Sri Sri Radha Radha-kanta Mandira of Sri Vakresvara Pandita

Sri Sri Radha Radha-kanta along with Lalita sakhi (left) and Lord Caitanya on the extreme left.

***Puspa-samadhi* of Sri Vakresvara Pandita on the outside of the main altar**

9. Sudevi Kunja

Bhakti-ratnakara (Fifth Wave) describes: "On the northwest of Radha-kunda is Harit-kunja, which gives bliss to Sudevi sakhi. It has green creepers, trees, and birds. The platforms and courtyards are all made of emeralds. Here everything is green; Radha and Krishna come here to play dice." Sudevi Kunja is situated close to Sri Gopala Manipura Mandira inside the residence of a Vrajavasi. At Sudevi Kunja, we can have *darsana* of a unique picture of Srimati Radharani playing the flute. Also, there is Sri Giriraja Govardhana-sila. There is also a small *goshala* at Sudevi Kunja.

Praying to these sacred kunjas, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami writes:
tata-madhura-nikunjah klpta-namana uccair
nija-parijana-vargaih samvibhajyasritas taih
madhukara-ruta-ramya yasya rajanti kamyas
tad ati-surabhi radha-kundam evasrayo me

"On the shores of Radha-kunda are many splendid, charming *kunjas* each named after Sri Radha's main friends and filled with the sweet humming sounds of bumblebees. May that very fragrant Radha-kunda be my only shelter." *(Sri Radha-kundastakam, 6 of Stavavali)*

Unique darsana of Srimati Radharani playing the flute at Sudevi-kunja

Beautiful Sri Giriraja Govardhana-sila

10. Sri Sri Radha Syamasundara Mandira

Sri Sri Radha Syamasundara Mandira is situated close to Sri Sri Radha-kanta Mandira. This is the sitting place of Sri Syamananda Pandita at Radha-kunda. Here we can have the blessed *darsana* of Sri Sri Radha Syamasundara and the *puspa samadhi* of Syamananda Pandita. There is also a small *gaushala* at the temple. *Brahma-samhita 5.38* states: *"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Syamasundara, Krishna Himself with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love."*

Sri Sri Radha Syamasundara

Sri Sri Radha Syamasundara Mandira

11. Sri Sri Radha Damodara Mandira

Sri Sri Radha Damodara Mandira is close to Sri Sri Radha Syamasundara Mandira. In this small temple, we can have the beautiful *darsana* of the *pratibhu* murtis of Sri Sri Radha Damodara. In the temple courtyard is a small *gaushala* with some beautiful cows that supply milk to the deities. There is also a deer named Radharani kept as a pet by the priest. The original Sri Sri Radha Damodara temple in Vrindavana was established by Srila Jiva Gosvami. This temple is under the ownership of the *gosains* of the Radha Damodara temple in Vrindavana.

Sri Sri Radha Damodara

12. Srinivasa Acarya Kunja

This is the place where the great Vaisnava, Srinivasa Acarya stayed and performed his *bhajana* when he visited Radha-kunda. This spot is also known as Srinivasa *baithaka*. Srinivasa Acarya worshiped a small deity of Lord Krishna named *Jhula Thakura*. The deity received the name *Jhula Thakura* because Srinivasa Acarya always kept the deity in his bead bag. The word *'jhula'* means 'bag' and *'thakura'* means 'most worshipable Lord'. A temple was established in Vrindavana at Dhira Samira near the Gopesvara Mahadeva Mandira, where Srinivasa Acarya performed *bhajana* and where his deity is still being worshipped. In this *kunja*, there is a temple of Sri Sri Radha Madhava. Sri Vigrahas at the altar is big deities Sri Sri Radha Neelmani (top); small deities: original Radha Madhava, middle left Gaura-Nitai, middle Giriraja sila, right Gopala Ji. The site also has guest rooms. Ownership of this temple is with Sri Gopala Manipura Mandira.

Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 1.33 describes: *"Both Rupa Gosvami and Sanatana Gosvami brought various scriptures to Vrindavana and collected the essence of these by compiling many scriptures on devotional service. In this way they delivered all rascals and fallen souls."*

Srila Srinivasa Acarya has sung the famous prayers to the Six Gosvamis of Vrindavana - *Sad-gosvamy-astaka*:
nana-sastra-vicaranaika-nipunau sad-dharma-samsthapakau
lokanam hita-karinau tri-bhuvane manyau saranyakarau
radha-krishna-padaravinda-bhajananandena mattalikau
vande rupa-sanatanau raghu-yugau sri-jiva-gopalakau

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvamis, namely Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Sri Jiva

Gosvami, and Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, who are very expert in scrutinizingly studying all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus, they are honoured all over the three worlds and they are worth taking shelter of because they are absorbed in the mood of the *gopis* and are engaged in the transcendental loving service of Radha and Krishna."

Srinivasa Acarya was the disciple of Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami. Following the instruction of Srila Jiva Gosvami, Srinivasa Acarya along with Srila Narottama dasa Thakura and Syamananda Pandita started the first book distribution *sankirtana* party when they took the sacred books of the Gosvamis to Bengal for distribution. *Bhakti-ratnakara* describes that Sri Raghava Pandita (whose cave is near *Apsara-kunda* at Govardhana) personally took Srinivasa Acarya and Narottama on Vraja-mandala-parikrama. Srinivasa Acarya's residence is at Yajigrama, which is a short distance from Katwa where Lord Caitanya took sannyasa. There is a famous pastime of Srinivasa Acarya with Ramacandra Kaviraja that took place at Yajigrama near Katwa. According to the *Gaura-gonaddesha-dipika*, Srinivasa Acarya is Mani Manjari in Lord Krishna's pastimes.

Sri Sri Radha Neelmani (top); small deities: original Radha Madhava, middle left Gaura-Nitai, middle Giriraja sila, right Gopala Ji

Srila Srinivasa Acarya

13. Sri Sri Radha Ramana Mandira

In this temple, we can have the *darsana* of *pratibhu murtis* of Sri Sri Radha-ramana. Also on the altar are the beautiful deities of Sri Revati Balarama. The original Radha-ramana temple in Vrindavana was established by Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami. By the desire of all the devotees, the *pratibhu murti* of Radha-ramana was installed at Radha-kunda. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada visited this temple in November 1973, while on a visit with his disciples to Radha-kunda. There is also a *Rasa-mandala* in the courtyard of this temple. This is one of the six *Rasa-mandalas* excavated and established by Sri Narayana Bhatta around Radha-kunda.

Sri Sri Radha-ramana (left) and Sri Revati Balarama (right)

14. Govinda-ghata

At this *ghata* on the eastern bank of Radha-kunda, where a large neem tree hangs over the water's edge, the Divine lovers Sri Sri Radha Krishna sometimes enjoy swing *(jhulana)* pastimes. Once Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Rupa Gosvami, and Raghunatha dasa Gosvami were sitting here discussing the ambrosial pastimes of the Divine lovers, when Sanatana Gosvami suddenly expressed a doubt about the verse from Srila Rupa Gosvami's book *Catu-puspanjali* comparing the braided hair of Srimati Radharani to a serpent's black hood.

nava-gorocana-gaurim, pravarendivarambaram
mani-stabaka-vidyoti, veni-vyalangana-phanam

"O Queen of Vrindavana, Sri Radha, more resplendent than gorocana, whose sari is the hue of a blue lotus flower. O Queen, Your beautiful braid with many gems is glistening like the hood of a serpent." When Sanatana Gosvami read his composition, he inquired whether this was a proper comparison. At noon later the same day, Sanatana Gosvami came to Govinda-ghata to bathe in the sacred kunda. At that time, Sanatana Gosvami saw some girls playing under a tree nearby. Seeing the hair of one girl, he thought it was a serpent climbing her back. In astonishment he cried out and tried to warn the unsuspecting girl. The girls, on seeing Sanatana Gosvami's anxiety, smiled and then disappeared. Srila Sanatana Gosvami was overwhelmed by the incident. When he regained his composure, he returned to Rupa Gosvami and exclaimed, *"Whatever you have written is perfectly correct!"* In this way Rupa Gosvami understood the heart of Sanatana Gosvami. Feeling great ecstasy in his mind, Sanatana Gosvami then returned to Govardhana.

Govinda-ghata on the banks of Sri Radha-kunda

15. Three Gosvami Samadhi

Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami

Going up the steps beside Sri Banke-bihari Mandira at the Sangam, on our left are the *Teen Gosvami Samadhis*, or the Three Gosvami Samadhis of Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami and Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. During their stay at Radha-kunda, the last *dvadasi* before the Kartika month begins marks the Disappearance Day of these three Gosvamis. All three Gosvamis left on the same *tithi*, but in different years: 1579, 1582 and 1583, respectively.

In those days, it was feared that Mughal fanatics might find the tombs of Vaisnava saints and desecrate them. Therefore, to protect the sanctity of such great devotees, their bodies were cremated at this spot under the guidance of Srila Jiva Gosvami. A portion of the ashes was kept here at the Teen Gosvami Samadhi, while another portion of the ashes was entombed at different places. The ashes of Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami were placed in a *samadhi* inside the garden of the *64 Samadhis* near Radha Govinda Mandira in Vrindavana. The ashes of Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami were placed in a *samadhi* at the Radha Damodara temple in Vrindavana, while the ashes of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami were placed in a *samadhi* on the banks of Radha-kunda. Inside this shrine, we can see three small marble platforms marking the *samadhis*. On our left side is Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, on the right side is Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and behind is Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami. Since all three left on the same *tithi*, their *puspa-samadhis* were established here together out of deep respect for them. So, this is called the Teen Gosvami Samadhis.

THREE GOSWAMI SAMADHI MANDIR
SRILA RAGHUNATHA DASA GOSWAMI
SRILA RAGHUNATHA BHATTA GOSWAMI
SRILA KRSNADASA KAVIRAJA GOSWAMI

Three Gosvami Samadhi

On our left side is Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, on the right side is Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and behind is Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami

16. Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami Bhajana-kutira

Just a few steps from Teen Gosvami Samadhis, overlooking Govinda-ghata, is Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami Bhajana-kutira. This is where Gopala Bhatta Gosvami used to sit and perform his *bhajana*, on the banks of Radha-kunda. Following the instructions by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, when Sri Gopala Bhatta came to Vrindavana from Srirangam (South India), he joined the other *Gosvamis*, who were overjoyed to meet him. He then went on parikrama of the twelve forests of Vrindavana and then came and stayed here in Radha-kunda for some time. He mostly stayed in Vrindavana where he established the Sri Radharamana Mandira after one of his *Salagrama-silas* self-manifested into the extremely beautiful deity of Sri Radharamana.

Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila chapter 10 text 105 describes, *"Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, the forty-seventh branch, was one of the great and exalted branches of the tree. He always engaged in discourses about love of Godhead in the company of Rupa Gosvami and Sanatana Gosvami."* Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami was the son of Venkata Bhatta, a resident of Sri Rangam. Gopala Bhatta formerly belonged to the disciplic succession of the Ramanuja-sampradaya but later became part of the Gaudiya-sampradaya. In the year 1433 *Sakabda* (A.D. 1511), when Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu was touring South India, He stayed for four months during the period of *Caturmasya* at the house of Venkata Bhatta, who then got the opportunity to serve the Lord to his heart's content. Gopala Bhatta also got the opportunity to serve the Lord at this time. Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami was later initiated by his uncle, the great sannyasi Prabodhananda Sarasvati. Both the father and the mother of Gopala Bhatta Gosvami were extremely fortunate, for they dedicated their entire lives to the service of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. They allowed Gopala Bhatta Gosvami to go to Vrindavana, and they gave up their lives thinking of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. When Lord Caitanya was later informed that Gopala Bhatta Gosvami had gone to Vrindavana and met Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami, He was very pleased, and He advised Sri Rupa and Sanatana to accept Gopala Bhatta Gosvami as their younger brother and take care of him. Sri Sanatana Gosvami, out of his great affection for Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, compiled the *Vaisnava smrti* named *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* and published it under his name. Under the instruction of Srila Rupa and Sanatana, Gopala Bhatta Gosvami installed one of the seven principal Deities of Vrindavana, the Radharamana Deity. The *sevaits* (priests) of the Radharamana temple belong to the *Gaudiya-sampradaya*.

When Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami took permission from all the Vaisnavas before writing *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*, Gopala Bhatta Gosvami also gave him his blessings, but he requested him not to mention his name in the book. Therefore, Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami has mentioned Gopala Bhatta Gosvami only very cautiously in one or two passages of the *Caitanya-caritamrta*. Srila Jiva Gosvami has written in the beginning of his *Tattva-sandarbha*, "A devotee from southern India who was born of a brahmana family and was a very intimate friend of Rupa Gosvami and Sanatana Gosvami has written a book that he has not compiled chronologically. Therefore I, a tiny living entity known as *jiva*, am trying to assort the events of the book chronologically, consulting the direction of great personalities like Madhvacarya, Sridhara Svami, Ramanujacarya and other senior Vaisnavas in the disciplic succession." In the beginning of the *Bhagavat-sandarbha* there are similar statements by Srila Jiva Gosvami. Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami compiled a book called *Sat-kriyasara-dīpika*, edited the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, wrote a foreword to the *Sat-sandarbha* and a commentary on the *Krishna-karnamrta*, and installed the Radharamana Deity in Vrindavana. In the *Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika* (184) it is mentioned that his previous name in the pastimes of Lord Krishna was *Ananga-manjari*. Sometimes he is also said to have been an incarnation of *Guna-manjari*. Srinivasa Acarya and Gopinatha Pujari were two of his disciples.

Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami Bhajana-kutira

17. Sri Sri Radha Govinda Mandira

This is where Srila Rupa Gosvami's beloved deity, Sri Govindadeva Ji, stayed on His way to Jaipur. Here we can have the *darsana* of the beautiful *pratibhu murtis* of Sri Sri Radha Govinda Ji. The *candana* (sandalwood paste) decorations on Govindadeva Ji's face and hands are very beautiful and famous throughout Radha-kunda. Sri Sri Radha Govinda are worshipped very gorgeously in this large temple and are astoundingly beautiful. In the hot summer months, Lord Govindaji wears only a *kaupina* during the *mangala-arati darsana*, and one can see the resplendent and blessed transcendental darsana of the Lord. Raja Man Singh, the king of Jaipur, built this temple in 1591, just one year after he completed building the Govindaji Mandira in Vrindavana. Just outside of Sri Sri Radha Govinda Mandira, there is a *rasa-mandala*, a large circular platform. This is one of the places where Lord Krishna performed *rasa-lila*.

Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila texts 14 to 16 and 19 describe: *"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is endowed with great power. The glowing effulgence of His transcendental form is the impersonal Brahman, which is absolute, complete and unlimited and which displays the varieties of countless planets, with their different opulences, in millions and millions of universes." "The opulences of the impersonal Brahman spread throughout the millions and millions of universes. That Brahman is but the bodily effulgence of Govinda. I worship Govinda. He is my Lord. Only by His grace am I empowered to create the universe." As the one sun appears reflected in countless jewels, so Govinda manifests Himself [as Paramatma] in the hearts of all living beings.*

Sri Sri Radha Govinda Ji

18. Giriraja Jihva Mandira

At this temple, we can have the blessed darsana of the Tongue of Govardhana, which was discovered while excavating Sri Radha-kunda. In front of this temple, there is a tree. Underneath this tree, we can have the *darsana* of Lord Krishna's handprint. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's following of the regulative principles was like lines on a stone. Under no circumstances could they ever be erased or changed. Raghunatha dasa saw Sri Radha-kunda to be the ambrosial nectar of Srimati Radharani's transcendental love for Syamasundara. Therefore, he would never wash any kind of utensils or clothes in Radha-kunda. He saw that sometimes people were washing clothes and utensils there, and he felt very bad. He decided to dig a separate well so that residents would not have to use the sacred waters of Radha-kunda. Following the instructions of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, the Vrajavasis started digging a well, which is now known as Gopa-kupa, just opposite Sri Madhavendra Puri's Baithaka. During the digging, they struck a rock which immediately started bleeding profusely. Horrified, the workers stopped digging and ran to Raghunatha dasa to inform him of the incident. Raghunatha dasa immediately told the workers to stop the work as some offence may have been committed.

That night, as Raghunatha dasa was resting on the banks of Sri Radha-kunda, Lord Krishna appeared to him in a dream and said, *"Giri-Govardhana is My body and each of the limbs of My body are various parts of Govardhana Hill. That stone which began to bleed when cut is the tongue of Govardhana. Now take that stone out, install it, and make a small temple for My devotees to worship."* Raghunatha dasa personally arranged for that stone to be taken out of the ground and installed it in a little temple. Today, the sacred "Tongue of Govardhana" is still worshipped at Jihva Mandira at Radha-kunda by so many fortunate Vaisnavas who visit there. So here in this simple but beautiful little temple is the tongue of Govardhana which was revealed to Srila Raghunatha dasa and by whose mercy we can all get the blessings on this very day.

From this pastime, we should know that the Supreme Lord is a person. When the Lord appears, even in the form of stone, we can reciprocate our love fully, just as in His original form. The absolute nature is explained, arache visnu-siladira-gurusu naramatira vaisnare jati-bhudhih that when the Lord appears in the form of a Deity, one should never consider that it is simply a piece of stone, but it is Krishna Himself. One who sees the Deity in the temple to be made of stone, one who sees the guru as an ordinary man, one who sees the Vaisnava as belonging to any particular sect or caste or any material distinction, that person, it is explained, his consciousness is a consciousness which is coming from hell, naraka-bhudhih. On the basis of the scripture, the sadhu, and the guru, we must understand the truth of Lord Krishna's transcendental nature and the transcendental nature of all those things and all those people who have an intimate relationship with Lord Krishna. [HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj lecture Kartika Yatra 1998 to Vrindavana]

Sri Sri Giriraja Jihva Mandira

Sri Sri Giriraja Jihva

19. Pancha Pandava Ghata

Formerly standing here on the banks of Syama-kunda were five trees, the five Pandavas, who took the bodies of trees to meditate here on the banks of this sacred kunda. When Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was excavating Syama-kunda, to make it the same shape as Radha-kunda, these five trees were scheduled to be cut down. In a dream, the five Pandavas headed by Yudhisthira came before Raghunatha dasa and asked him not to cut down the five trees, as they were residing in them and performing *bhajana*. On awakening the next morning, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami came and identified the five Pandava trees, forbidding anyone from cutting them. This accounts for the unusual shape of Syama-kunda.

20. Pilu tree

At the top of the steps of Manasa-pavana-ghata is a *pilu* bush, where the *sakhis* of Srimati Radharani hang their clothing whilst taking a bath at Syama-kunda. This *pilu* bush was formerly a *brahmana* from Kasi (Varanasi), whose only desire was to render service to Sri Sri Radha and Krishna. He received this benediction and took the form of a *pilu* bush on the banks of Syama-kunda. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura often discussed *Radha-Krishna-lila* with this *pilu* bush.

Pilu tree

21. Manasa-Pavana-ghata

The celebrated Manasa-pavana-ghata is on the banks of Syama-kunda where, according to Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, Srimati Radharani and all Her *sakhis* come and bath every day at noon before meeting Lord Krishna at Radha-kunda. With the desire in Her mind (*manasa*) of achieving Krishna, Srimati Radharani takes a bath in this ghata. This is the favourite ghata of Srimati Radharani. In *Sri Govinda-lilamrta [7.114-115]*, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami mentions:

vayor disy asti subalanandada kunja-salika
radhayangikrta yasyas tirtham manasa-pavanam
nityam snaty atra salibhih kunde'smin vipulagraha
krsna-padabja-madhvika-paniye krsnavat priye

"On the northwestern bank is Subala's kunja named Subalanandada. This kunja was accepted by Srimati Radharani and is known as Manasa-pavana-ghata. Sri Radha always very eagerly bathes there with Her sakhis because this water consists of honey flowing from Lord Krishna's lotus feet. Therefore, this water is as dear to Her as Krishna Himself."

Celebrated Manasa-pavana-ghata

22. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami Bhajana-kutira

This is the place situated between the banks of Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda where the *bhajana-kutira* of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami is situated. Raghunatha dasa Gosvami spent about 48 years living on the banks of the sacred *kundas*, performing his *bhajana* and worshipping Govardhana Hill. For the first few years, he lived under the trees situated around the *kundas*. He chanted on *japa* beads 64 rounds every day, offered one thousand obeisances to Lord Krishna and two thousand obeisances to Vaisnavas. He would embrace every Vaisnava he met. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami is the *prayojana acarya*. *Prayojana* refers to the highest goal of life, which is *Prema-bhakti,* ecstatic love of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Raghunatha dasa Gosvami represents the highest stage of this love – the mood of the servants of the Gopis of *Vraja*, dedicating everything to the service of Srimati Radharani. He is the embodiment of the final goal through his intense renunciation and love for the Supreme. *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 7.146* describes *sambhanda, abhidheya and prayojana*.

Lord Krishna stands guard to protect Raghunatha dasa from tigers

Many wonderful pastimes occurred in the life of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami here at Radha-kunda. Once when Raghunatha dasa was sitting on the bank of Syama-kunda performing his *bhajana*, two tigers came out of the jungle to drink water from the kunda. Raghunatha dasa was so absorbed in chanting that he did not notice the tigers nearby. Lord Krishna suddenly appeared there and stood at some distance, just to make sure that no harm came to Raghunatha. At that same time, Srila Sanatana Gosvami arrived on a visit to Radha-kunda and was amazed to see the Lord standing guard over Raghunatha dasa. As the tigers finished drinking and left, Lord Krishna turned and smiled at Sanatana Gosvami and then disappeared. Sanatana Gosvami went over to Raghunatha dasa and admonished him for his negligence, asking what kind of *bhajana* he was doing that the Supreme Lord had to come and protect him from wild animals. Sanatana suggested that Raghunatha build a *kutira* and perform his *bhajana* inside.

Srimati Radharani shades Raghunatha dasa from the scorching sun with the veil of Her sari

The next time, it was a scorching hot summer day with the sun overhead. Raghunatha dasa was immersed in the chanting of the holy names in meditation on the *lila* of Radha and Krishna. Srimati Radharani appeared and with the veil of Her sari She was shading Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's head. Bearing the full force of the scorching sun, Srimati Radharani started to perspire profusely, causing Her clothing to become wet and making the ground muddy. Sanatana Gosvami happened to come again this time. He got a shock when he saw Srimati Radharani protecting Raghunatha dasa from the hot midday sun. Radharani glanced at Sanatana, smiled, and suddenly disappeared. Sanatana Gosvami came and told Raghunatha dasa, *"This is too much; now Srimati Radharani is standing shading your head. You are in the nice cool shade of Her sari, and She is under the sun perspiring. What type of bhajana is this? Because of the nature of your bhajana, They are coming from Their own lila just to protect you, to serve you. This is not the spirit of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu's teachings. You should build a bhajana kutira."*

Raghunatha, in disbelief, turned around and to his amazement saw the lotus footprints of Srimati Radharani in the soft, muddy earth. Raghunatha started crying piteously. Falling down, he began madly rolling back and forth on the muddy ground. Sometime later, Sanatana Gosvami had a *bhajana kutira* built for Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. To this day on the banks of Radha-kunda, we worship Raghunatha dasa Gosvami in this holy place. That was the beginning of the *bhajana kutira* system in Vrindavana. There he could completely immerse himself in giving pleasure and service to Radha and Krishna through his *bhajana* without Their having to come and serve him.

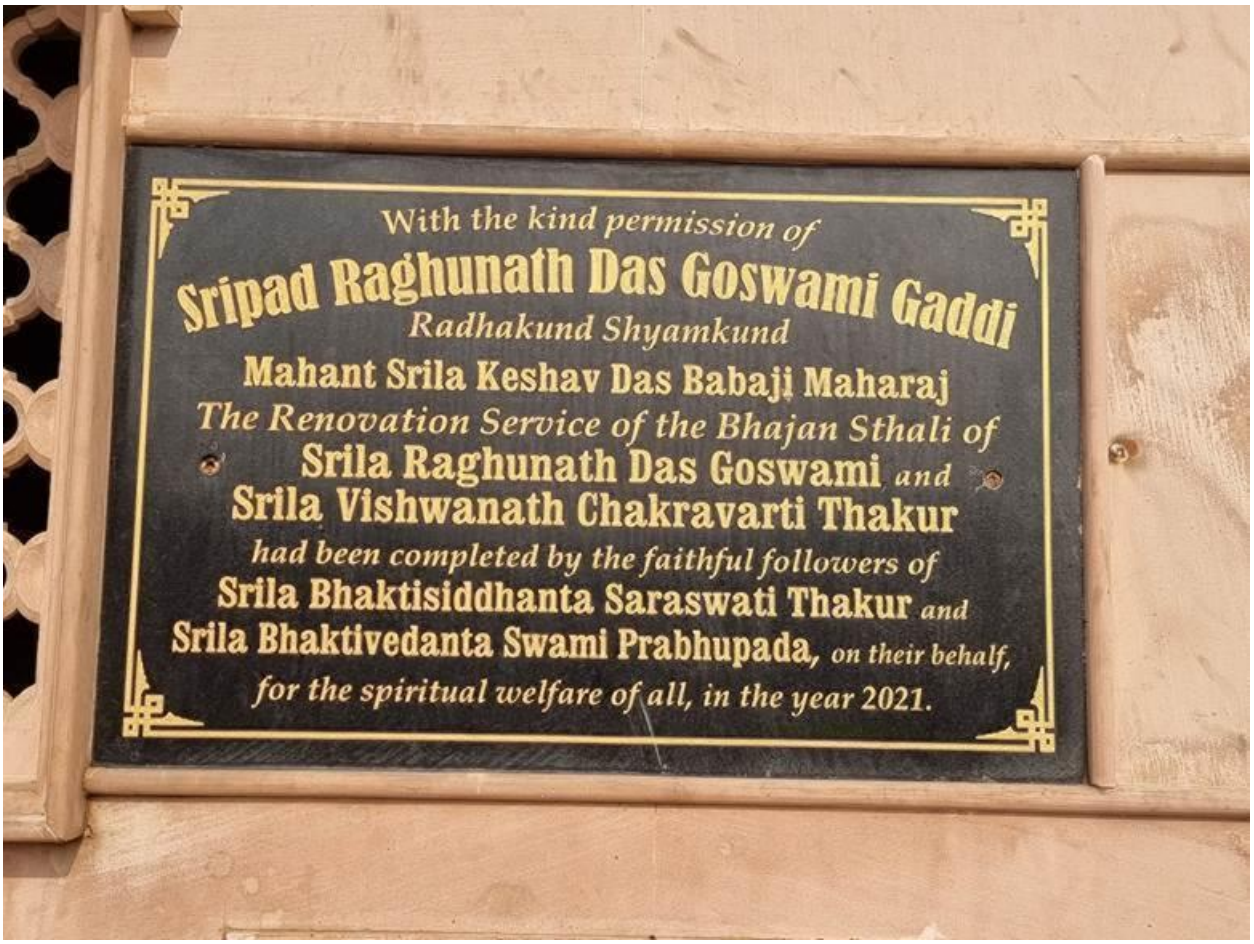
Lalita-Madhava

Srila Rupa Gosvami had just written the first draft of *Lalita-Madhava. Lalita-Madhava* describes the intense separation between Srimati Radharani and Lord Krishna, and especially the separation of the *gopis* from Krishna. Raghunatha dasa, who was living at Radha-kunda, received the manuscript of *Lalita-Madhava*. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami is the *prayojana acarya* - teaching by his writings and his example the highest principles of love in separation as an associate of Radharani. *When he read Lalita-Madhava, he was so engrossed in the feelings of separation that Srila Rupa Gosvami had so beautifully described that he went mad. There were tears pouring out of his eyes, and he just held the Lalita-Madhava to his heart and was just crying and crying. He could not even communicate with anyone.* The devotees informed Rupa Gosvami of what had happened to Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. So, Srila Rupa Gosvami quickly wrote another book called the *Danakeli Kaumudi*, which describes the ecstatic meeting of Radha and Krishna. He went directly to Sri Radha-kunda and said to Raghunatha dasa, "I want you to read this nice book I have written. And as far as that Lalita-Madhava goes, some corrections are necessary, so give it back to me." Raghunatha dasa read *Danakeli Kaumudi*, describing the beautiful reunion, or *sambhoga*, of Radha and Krishna, and his heart became completely pacified and all his anxieties disappeared. He became filled with joy.

Apparent Overeating

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was so austere that he would just have a little buttermilk every day, sometimes every few days. Even while honouring that little buttermilk, he would feel ashamed of himself and think, "If one has love and devotion to Lord Krishna, that love is so satisfying that one should not be concerned with maintaining this physical body." He considered himself a supreme enjoyer when he would have a little bit of butter or buttermilk every few days. As a result, he became very skinny and thin. He would just wear torn, discarded clothes that were thrown on the street as garbage. His dress was just a *kaupin*, a small chaddar, and in the winter, perhaps a patched, torn quilt. This was the standard of his renunciation. One day Raghunatha dasa Gosvami had terrible pains in his stomach from

indigestion. Devotees brought a Kaviraj, an Ayurvedic doctor. The doctor examined Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and told the devotees, "He has over-eaten sweet rice-milk, rice, and sugar cooked together." The devotees were outraged: "How is this possible? How can Raghunatha dasa Gosvami overeat? Moreover, he never eats sweet rice." They thought the doctor was in illusion or he was blasphemous. Raghunatha dasa revealed that, in his internal transcendental loving meditation on Radha and Krishna, Srimati Radharani gave him Her own remnants of sweet rice, and in his transcendental meditation he ate it. That is what gave him the indigestion. So, he was given some real medicine for indigestion and then he recovered.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Radhakund Shyamkund
Mahant Srila Keshav Das Babaji Maharaj
The Renovation Service of the Bhajan Sthali of
Srila Raghunath Das Goswami and
Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur
had been completed by the faithful followers of
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur and
Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, on their behalf,
for the spiritual welfare of all, in the year 2021.

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami Bhajana-kutira

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami Bhajana-kutira

One time, as the tiger was drinking water from Syama-kunda, Lord Krishna appeared with a stick in His hand to protect Raghunatha dasa Gosvami when he was immersed in his bhajana. Next time Sanatana Gosvami saw Srimati Radharani appear and with the veil of Her sari She was shading Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's head when he was immersed in the chanting of the holy names on a very hot summer day.

23. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura Bhajana-kutira

Situated directly beside Manasa-pavana-ghata at Syama-kunda and next to Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's *bhajana-kutira* is the *bhajana-kutira* of Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. He came to Radha-kunda about 75 years after the disappearance of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. He appeared in Bengal in the year 1638. Visvanatha Cakravarti spent a large part of his life at Radha-kunda performing his *bhajana* and writing over forty important books including: *Sri Krishna Bhavanamrta, Camatkara-candrika, Vraja-riti-cintamani, Madhurya-kadambini, Sankalpa-kalpa-druma*, as well as his very famous commentary on *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada extensively included the commentary and explanations of Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura when he compiled the purports of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. It is said that Cakravartipada was a plenary part of Srila Rupa Gosvami, who appeared to simplify the most difficult transcendental portions of Rupa's writings. When Visvanatha first arrived at Radha-kunda, he stayed in the *bhajana-kutira* of Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja and took shelter of Mukunda dasa, a disciple of Kaviraja Gosvami, who was taking care of the *kutira*. After a short stay, Visvanatha went back to Bengal. On his return to Radha-kunda, he stayed in his own *bhajana-kutira* just next to the *bhajana-kutira* of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami.

After the disappearance of Srila Jiva Gosvami in 1608, much confusion and conflict had arisen amongst the followers of Lord Caitanya until Visvanatha appeared. He soundly defeated all the deviant so-called scholars, re-established the Gaudiya Vaisnava Siddhanta, and became the undisputed leader of all Vaisnavas in the world. Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura worshipped a small deity of Sri Gokulananda and later installed Him in the temple of Sri Sri Radha Gokulananda, which was established by Lokanatha dasa Gosvami in Vrindavana. Visvanatha also worshipped the *Govardhana-sila* of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, which was personally given by Lord Caitanya to Raghunatha dasa. Next to Visvanatha's *bhajana-kutira* at Manasa-pavana-ghata, one can see a *pilu* bush, which is the green-leafed creeper at the top of the ghata steps. This *pilu* bush was in a former life a *brahmana* who resided in Kasi (Varanasi). Because of his intense desire to serve Sri Sri Radha Krishna, he was blessed to take birth as this pilu bush on the banks of Syama-kunda. This was all revealed to Visvanatha by the personality of the pilu bush himself. Visvanatha often discussed *Radha-Krishna-lila* with this pilu bush. When Lord Krishna planted His pearl garden near the Yamuna during the Mukta-carita pastime, it was pilu bushes that grew and provided Krishna with so many wonderful pearls. Local Vaisnavas say that in *aprakata-lila*, pilu bushes are covered with precious pearls instead of flowers.

During the writing of his book *Mantrartha-dipika*, which was an explanation of the Kama-gayatri mantra, Visvanatha suddenly became perplexed. After completing extensive research and studying all the known literature, Visvanatha concluded that there were twenty-five full syllables contained in the Kama-gayatri mantra. This greatly disturbed him because Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami had stated in Sri Caitanya-caritamrta that there were only twenty-four and a half syllables. Visvanatha began to wonder how is that such an exalted Vaisnava as Krsnadasa Kaviraja could possibly commit such an error, when all the known scriptures have concluded that there are twenty-five full syllables contained in the Kama-gayatri mantra. Immediately condemning himself for having such offensive thoughts, that a great Vaisnava like Krsnadasa could have made a mistake, Visvanatha, feeling extremely disturbed within his mind, concluded it was better to give up his life rather than become an offender at the lotus feet of Kaviraja Gosvami. Having decided to fast unto death, Visvanatha stayed awake the whole night feeling great lamentation and sorrow at his misfortune. As dawn approached, Visvanatha momentarily fell asleep and experienced a wonderful dream in which Srimati Radharani suddenly appeared before him.

Smiling benevolently and speaking in a sweet voice, Srimati Radharani told Visvanatha, *"O Visvanatha, please don't lament anymore. What Krsnadasa wrote is true; he is also My confidential maidservant and thus he knows everything about My innermost moods. The Kama-gayatri is the mantra for worshipping Me. Indeed, I am revealed by the syllables of this mantra. Look at the book entitled Varnagama-bhasvadi to find the solution to the half-syllable. Krsnadasa read this book and then wrote as he did. The letter ya, which is followed by the letter vi, as in the words kama devaya vidmuhe, is considered to be a half-syllable. This falls on Krishna's forehead because His forehead is shaped like the halo of a half-moon. All other letters of the mantra are full syllables and therefore full moons. Now wake up, read the book, and compile the evidence for everyone's benefit."* Immediately waking up, Visvanatha experienced ecstatic symptoms throughout his body and felt himself blessed to have had the darsana of the most worshipable Srimati Radharani. Searching out the book *Varnagama-bhasvadi* and reading it thoroughly, Visvanatha joyfully completed the writing of his book *Mantrartha-dipika*, explaining the most confidential meanings of the Kama-gayatri mantra. *Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika* describes that in Lord Krishna's pastimes, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura is *Vinoda-vallari Manjari*, one of Radharani's intimate maidservants. The samadhi of Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura is at Sri Sri Radha Gokulananda Mandira in Vrindavana.

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura Bhajana-kutira

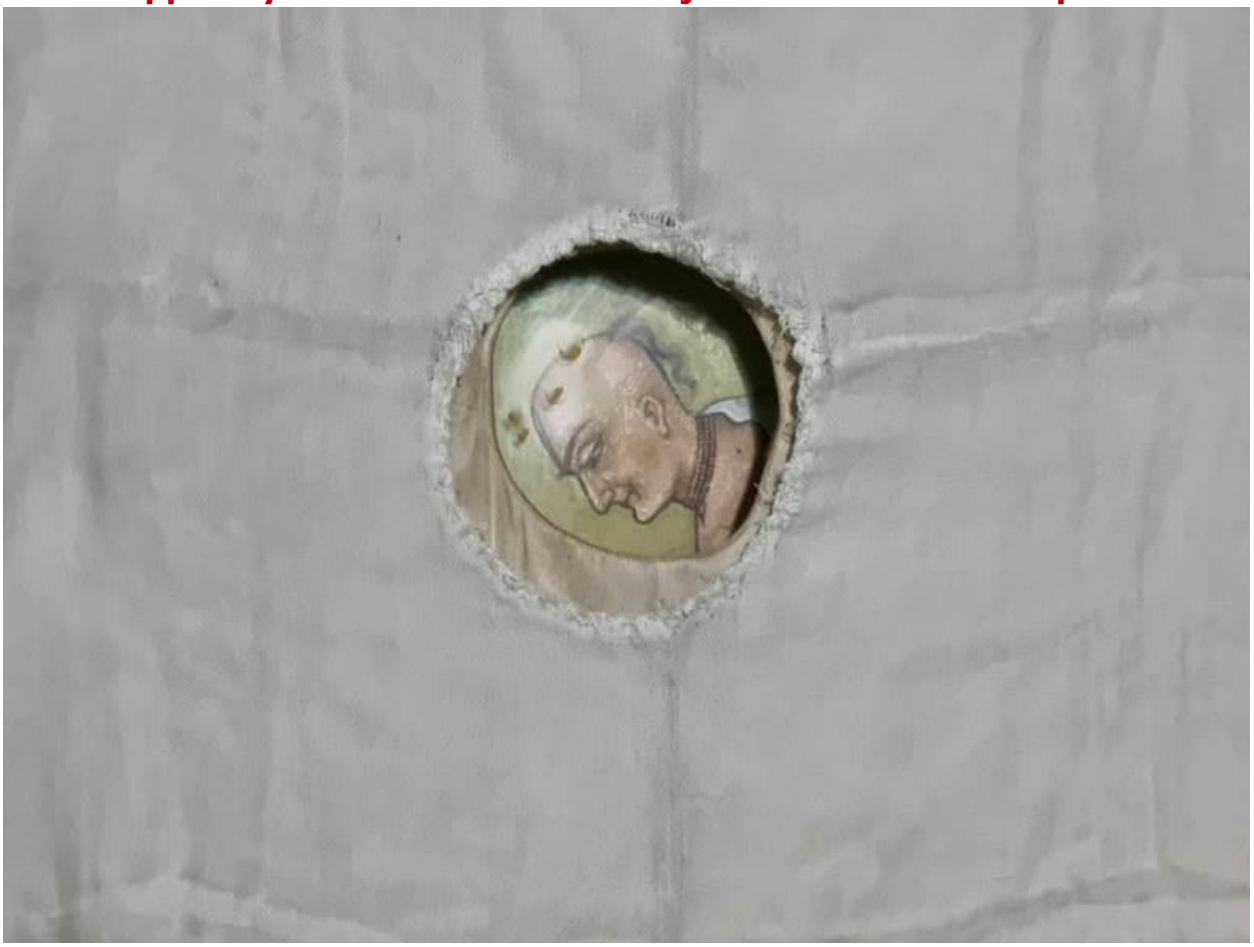
Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura Bhajana-kutira

24. Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami Bhajana-kutira

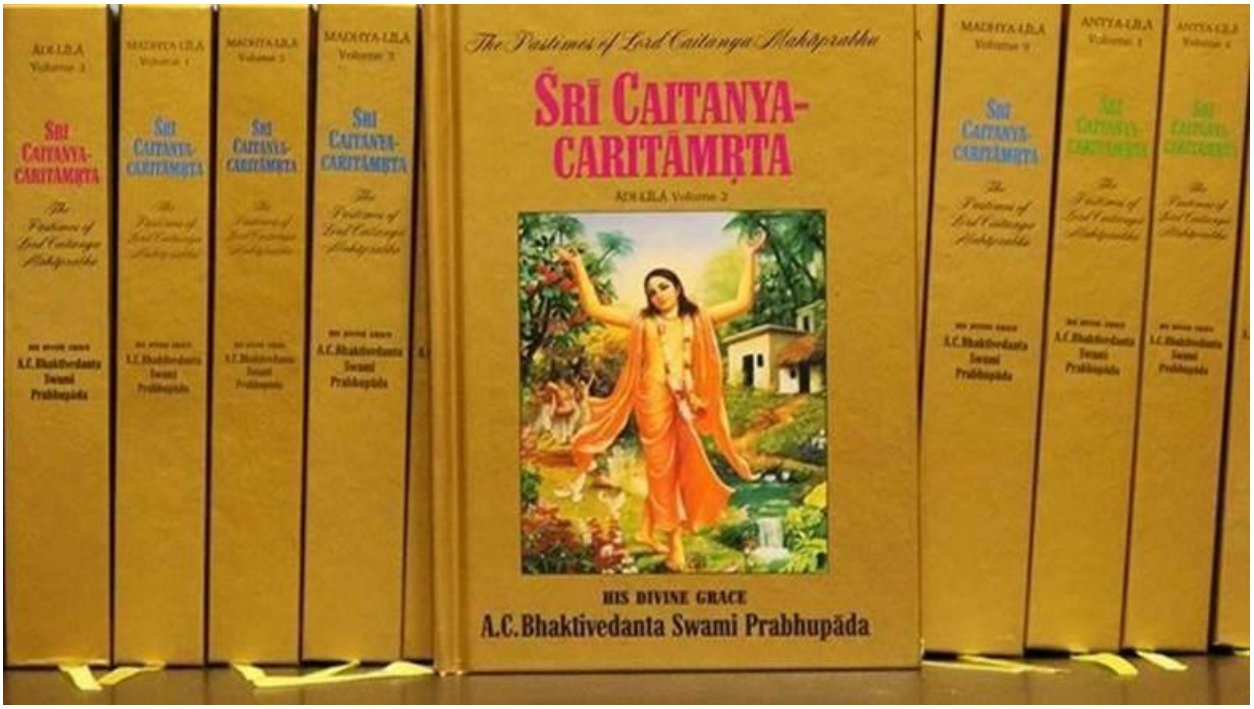
At this place, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami wrote the great Vaisnava classic, *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*, the most authoritative description of the transcendental pastimes and sublime life and precepts of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami came to Vrindavana on the orders of Lord Nityananda, who appeared to him in a dream. On his arrival at Radha-kunda, he took shelter of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, whom he accepted as his spiritual master. Raghunatha dasa would speak for about three hours on Lord Caitanya's pastimes every afternoon before an assembly of devotees. Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami took notes on everything that Raghunatha dasa spoke. Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami completed *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta* in 1581, and just one year later in 1582, he entered *samadhi*. He is also the author of the highly acclaimed *Govinda-lilamrta*, which describes the daily pastimes *(astaka-lila)* of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, as well as a commentary on Bilvamangala Thakura's *Krishna-karnamrta*, known as *Saranga-rangada*. He lived here on the banks of Syama-kunda for many years. Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami's *bhajana-kutira* is currently maintained by an elderly devotee. Inside the *bhajana-kutira*, we can see some of his few belongings.

HG Deena Bandhu Das writes in his book *Vraja-lila Part 3 - Giriraja the King of Mountains*, that when the renovation work of Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami's *bhajana-kutira* was going on several years ago, he was approached to get an ISKCON artist to duplicate the painting of Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami writing *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta* for the *bhajana-kutira*. One Babaji, who was an artist, had a vision in his meditation. He illustrated how Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami was sitting under a tree writing *Caitanya-caritamrta*. A peacock and some monkeys were watching. Fortunately, Deena Bandhu Prabhu was able to engage a famous artist from South Africa, Arca-vigraha dasi, who was spending her last days in Vrindavana. Copying this lovely painting was one of the last services she did in this material world.

Deities worshipped by Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami and his Japa beads in front.



Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami



Sri Caitanya-caritamrta

25. Sri Sri Gadadhara Caitanya Mandira

In this temple are the deities of Lord Nityananda, Lord Caitanya, and Gadadhara Pandita. The famous Vaisnava saints Ganga-mata Gosvamini and Laksmipriya lived and performed their *bhajana* at this temple. They were both disciples of Haridasa Pandita Gosvami, who was himself a disciple of Sri Gadadhara Pandita. Laksmipriya used to worship and take personal care of these deities. Ganga-mata Gosvamini was born into a royal family, and on the demise of her father, she became the queen. But after just a few years, she renounced the world and travelled to Vrindavana, where she slept on the banks of the Yamuna River and daily swept the Govindaji temple. Her spiritual master, Haridasa Pandita, sent her to Radha-kunda to stay with Laksmipriya, who daily chanted three hundred thousand names of Lord Krishna. After the disappearance of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, his Govardhana-sila was given to Laksmipriya to worship. After Laksmipriya's disappearance, the *sila* was worshipped by Krsnapriya Thakurani, and then finally given to Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura to worship. Srimati Radharani took part in Lord Caitanya's pastimes as Gadadhara Pandita. Lord Caitanya and Gadadhara Pandita were practically inseparable from childhood.

Sri Sri Caitanya Gadadhara along with Lord Nityananda on Their left

26. Sri Narahari Sarkara Samadhi in Dhauli-kunja

Sri Narahari Sarkara is one of the intimate associates of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Narahari was so dear to Lord Caitanya that he was the only devotee allowed to sing the praises of the Lord in His presence. Every day, while singing the *Gaura-arati*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura mentions the intimate service Narahari performed for Lord Caitanya: *'kiba narahari adikari camara dhulaya'* – Narahari is fanning Gaurasundara with a yak-tail *(camara)* fan. Sri Narahari Sarkara's samadhi at Radha-kunda is the place where he stayed, completely absorbed in *bhajana*. It is situated about 50 metres ahead of the Rasa-mandala outside the Radha Govindadeva Ji Mandira. From there the path turns right, but there is a road a bit to the left going straight ahead, and we take that road. About 20 metres on the left of the road, we find a small passage that takes us to the samadhi mandira. Born in the year 1480, Narahari Sarkara was a resident of Srikhanda, a village not far from Katwa in West Bengal. Sri Locana dasa Thakura, the author of *Sri Caitanya-mangala*, was his most famous disciple. Narahari Sarkara wrote many books and poetry glorifying Lord Krishna, Srimati Radharani and Lord Caitanya. His most famous books are *Sri Krishna-bhajanamrta* and *Pada-kalpa-taru*. In the later years of his life, Narahari Sarkara moved to Radha-kunda and performed his *bhajana*, where he gave up his body in the year 1540.

Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 177 describes that in *Vraja-lila*, he is the *sakhi* named Madhumati-devi, one of Srimati Radharani's most intimate friends. In fact, knowing this, Lord Caitanya and Nityananda Prabhu came to Narahari Sarkara's home in Srikhanda asking for honey *(madhu)*. Narahari immediately filled a large vessel with water from a nearby pond. By his amazing love for the Lord, the water was transformed into the most nectarean honey. Lord Caitanya gave Narahari the order in a dream to install three Deities of Himself, which are currently worshipped in Srikhanda, Katwa and Ganganagar. *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi 10.78-79* describes Narahari dasa Sarakara as a very famous devotee. In the *Caitanya-mangala*, it is stated that Sri Gadadhara dasa and Narahari Sarakara were extremely dear to Sri Caitanya

Mahaprabhu. The place where Sri Narahari Sarkara's samadhi is located was formerly the Bengali king Maharaja Kumara's palatial residence, known as Dhauli-kunja. There was also a small temple at the far end of the courtyard facing Sri Narahari Sarkara's *samadhi*, where the deities of Sri Telimohana were worshipped. More than twenty years ago, the Maharaja sold Dhauli-kunja to a local Vrajavasi farmer who knocked down the samadhi mandira and sold off the deities to a family of brahmanas from Badri.

Sri Narahari Sarkara Samadhi in Dhauli-kunja

Sri Narahari Sarkara

27. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura Bhajana-kutira

This is the *bhajana kutira* of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura (1838-1914) as well as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura (1874-1937) and is known as the *Vraja-Svananda-Sukhada-kunja*, or the grove that gives one happiness and bliss. This *kutira* was constructed in about 1900 and Bhaktivinoda Thakura regularly performed his bhajana here. After 1914, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura performed his *bhajana* at this place. In a small room at the rear of this *kutira* are the *Puspa-samadhi* of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, and some other exalted Gaudiya Vaisnava personalities. Here we also find the very cane that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta used. This reminds us that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta used to say that in the morning, we should sweep our minds a hundred times with a broom and in the evening, beat our minds a hundred times with a stick. In Vrindavana, we used to have *Bhagavad-gita* classes every evening in Srila Prabhupada's library, located there in his Vrindavana home. On one of the walls is a drawing of Srila Prabhupada with his son meeting Srila Bhaktisiddhanta in this house in Radha-kunda. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada came here with his youngest son, Vrindavana Candra De. That very rope bed that we see in the painting is here; the original table is here. Everything is still here from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's time in this holy place at Radha-kunda.

In 1930, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta renovated this *kutira* and to everyone's amazement, since he couldn't bend his knees in his old age, he installed a modern toilet, which had never been seen in Radha-kunda during that time. He was also the first sadhu to use a motor ca for going to preaching engagements, demonstrating that everything, including modern inventions, could be used for spreading Krishna consciousness. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta was one of the greatest revolutionary preachers in history, and once visited Vrindavana accompanied by a number of disciples dressed in western suits. The reason for doing this was to expose all the false renunciates dressed in the garb of *babajis*, but who secretly associate with women and indulge in illicit sex, smoke, and beg as a means of livelihood. There was tremendous opposition to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta from the local Babaji community, as well as so-called caste brahmanas and caste *gosvamis* (those who claim the title of *gosvami* or *brahmana* simply by birthright). Regardless of their stiff opposition, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta continued to preach fearlessly in spreading Lord Caitanya's movement and was known as the 'Lion Guru'. His giving the sacred thread to those not born in brahmana families created a storm of protest. On one occasion, as the thousand-strong Vraja-mandala-parikrama party led by the 'Lion Guru' arrived in the town of Vrindavana, stones were thrown at them and all the *jati-gosai* (caste *gosvamis*), out of protest, closed the doors of their temples. Only the *gosains* of the Radha Ramana temple kept their doors open, and being true followers of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, enthusiastically welcomed the Vraja-mandala-parikrama. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's struggle to establish the Krishna consciousness movement is unparalleled and his contribution will be remembered by generations of Krishna devotees the world over.

Vraja Svananda Sukhada kunja

Paraphanalia of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura at Vraja Svananda Sukhada kunja.

28. Bhanu Khor and Balarama-kunda

This is the place where Vrisabhanu Maharaja camped after the Govardhana puja. After exiting from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's home, if we continue down the road and turn right at the end of the road, 100 metres ahead, we will see the kunda called Bhanu Khor on our left side. Continuing down the road, to the northeast of Bhanu Khor, we come to the Balarama-kunda. By the instruction of Purnamasi, Lord Balarama stayed here with His *sakhas* on the day Sankhacuda was killed. Unfortunately, a portion of Balarama-kunda has now been developed as a residential area.

29. Sri Jagannatha Mandira

Sri Jagannatha Mandira is situated just ahead of Sri Govindaji Mandira. The most charming deities of Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra reside here and are worshipped very nicely. Every year, the devotees very joyfully take Their Lordships on Ratha-yatra around Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda.

Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra

30. Sri Sadbhuja Mahaprabhu Mandira and Sri Sri Radha Prema-bikhari Mandira

Sri Sadbhuja Mahaprabhu Mandira is on the Radha-kunda parikrama marg. Here we can have the *darsana* of Sadbhuja (the six-handed form of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu). Sri Sri Radha Prema-bikhari Mandira is located at the residence of the head *pujari* of Sri Jagannatha Mandira, which is only a short walk from Jagannatha Mandira. Here we can have the blessed *darsana* of Sri Sri Radha Prema-bikhari.

Sri Sadbhuja Gauranga Mahaprabhu

Sri Sri Radha Prema-bikhari

31. Sri Sri Radha Vraja-mohana Mandira

Sri Sri Radha Vraja-mohana Mandira is located on Sri Radha-kunda Parikrama Marg. Here we can have the unique and blessed deities of Sri Sri Radha Vraja-mohana and Lord Jagannatha.

Sri Sri Radha Vraja-mohana Mandira

Sri Sri Radha Vraja-mohana

32. Srila Jiva Gosvami Bhajana-kutira

This is the place where Srila Jiva Gosvami stayed and performed his *bhajana* when living at Radha-kunda. Here we can have the darsana of enchanting brass Sri Sri Radha Damodara. On the bottom step of the altar, we can see the red imprint of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's lotus feet from Puri. Also, we can see a photo of the original Damodara deity carved by Srila Rupa Gosvami in 1542. The original deity is currently in Jaipur. Even though Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was the inspiration and spiritual force behind the excavation of Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda, it was Jiva Gosvami who purchased the land, oversaw the excavation, and managed all the affairs. He also made sure that Srila Raghunatha dasa was properly taken care of because, being so deeply absorbed in the feelings of separation from Radha and Krishna, Raghunatha had practically no perception of worldly affairs.

Srila Jiva Gosvami was the greatest philosopher and most prolific Sanskrit writer. He arrived in Vrindavana in the year 1535 and took shelter at the lotus feet of his two uncles, Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami. Under their expert guidance he became a brilliant scholar, compiling a staggering four hundred thousand Sanskrit slokas delineating the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. His most famous work, the *Sat-sandarbhas*, is the penultimate in all philosophical understanding. He established the Sri Sri Radha-Damodara Mandira at Seva-kunja in Vrindavana in 1542. In the year 1608, he disappeared from this world and his samadhi is situated within the Radha-Damodara temple complex.

In *Navadvipa Dhama Mahatmya*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura describes how Jiva Gosvami was immensely fortunate to have the personal association of Lord Nityananda Prabhu, who took Jiva on a tour of Navadvipa Dhama, thus initiating Navadvipa Mandala Parikrama some 470 years ago. Nityananda Prabhu said to Jiva, *"Although in the eyes of common people, Visvambhara took sannyasa and left Navadvipa to go elsewhere, actually My Gauranga never gives up Mayapur or Navadvipa. The devotees can perceive His daily lila. You, Jiva, will also see Gauranga dancing. Around Mayapur is beautiful Antardvipa, where Brahma received the darsana of Gauranga. O Jiva, if you want to see all this, please go on parikrama. It will be very beneficial for you".* Hearing the Lord's words, Jiva, with tears in his eyes, fell flat like a stick at Nityananda Prabhu's feet and requested, *"You will show real mercy on this unworthy wretch if You Yourself take me on parikrama."* After humbly serving Srila Rupa Gosvami by washing his feet, preparing his manuscripts, and editing his books, he received *diksa*. After the disappearance of Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis, Jiva Gosvami became the *Gaudiya Sampradaya-acarya* and guided all Vaisnavas in Navadvipa, Vrindavana, and Jagannatha Puri. His books prove that Lord Caitanya's philosophy gives the essence of Vedic wisdom and the perfection of religion. Besides *Sat-sandarbhas, Gopala Campu* and *Harinama-vyakarana* are his most famous works. *Sat-sandarbhas* firmly establish the transcendental truths of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. They also confirm that Lord Sri Krishna is the Supreme Absolute Truth (*svayam bhagavan*), the cause of everything and the source of all *avataras*.

Sri Sri Radha Damodara

Srila Jiva Gosvami

33. Lalita-kunda, Mohana-kunda and Asta-sakhis-kundas

sarvada pritide devi lalite krsnavallabhe
tirtharaja namastubhyam Lalita-kunda-samjnaka

"O devi Lalita who is always very affectionate! O beloved of Lord Krishna! O king of holy places known as Lalita Kunda, I offer my respects to you!" *(Varaha Purana)*

This is the sacred kunda of Lalita Sakhi, the most intimate of all Srimati Radharani's *sakhis*. All the *asta-sakhis* have their *kundas* situated around Radha-kunda, but except for the monsoon season, only Lalita's kunda is visible. Lalita Sakhi manifested this kunda along with Mohana-kunda before both Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda, in preparation for Their appearance. Lalita along with Mohana (Krishna) called eighty-four holy places to come and reside there to give everyone the benefit of becoming free from the sins of six types of *hatya* (killing). The six types of killing are *bhruna-hatya* (abortion), *krmi-hatya* (killing of worms and insects), *go-hatya* (cow slaughter), *brahma-hatya* (killing of a *brahmana*), *svan-hatya* (killing of kinsmen), and *atma-hatya* (suicide). Actually, Lord Krishna had bathed in Lalita-kunda after killing Aristasura to atone for killing a bull. In reality, Lord Krishna wanted to get the association of Srimati Radharani and perform the *lila* of manifesting Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda. Knowing that by the favour of Lalita, who is the dear most friend and guardian of Radharani, one can get the association of Radha, Krishna wanted to please Lalita. In the evening when Lord Krishna met Srimati Radharani, She told Him to bathe in all the sacred *tirthas* of the universe to get free from the grave sin of *go-hatya*. Lord Krishna informed Her that He had already bathed in Lalita-kunda which relieves one of all the six types of killing, due to the presence of so many holy places in the water. Srimati Radharani's *sakhis* challenged, "We never saw those tirthas entering Lalita-kunda, so we don't accept!" This is when the pastime of the appearance of Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda happened.

Local Vrajavasis say after the monsoon, a large area outside Lalita-kunda is covered with water and at that time one can clearly see the *kundas* of the *asta-sakhis*, as well as Mohana-kunda, Balarama-kunda and Vrsabhanu-kunda (Bhanu Khor). A few years ago, the cleaning and repair of Lalita-kunda was done. Most of the devotees who helped do the cleaning were from ISKCON. A famous devotee from Mathura, Sriji Baba, constructed the nice *ghata* and shelter here with beautiful dioramas. On that wall over there on the eastern side, one Russian devotee has made a lovely painting of Lalita Sakhi. She has a munificent golden colour, and Her sari is the colour of peacock feathers. Out of the eight most confidential maidservants (*asta-sakhis*) of Srimati Radharani, Lalita is the foremost because of Her proximity to Radharani. She is known for her contradictory nature and hot temper, as well as her unswerving love for the Divine Couple. Before approaching Radharani, one must seek the blessings of Lalita Sakhi, and if she is pleased, then only can one approach Srimati Radharani.

Lalita Devi's personal assistant is Rupa Manjari, who appeared in *Caitanya-lila* as Srila Rupa Gosvami. Gaudiya Vaisnavas are known as *Rupanugas*, or followers of Srila Rupa Gosvami, and should aspire through the medium of the disciplic succession to assist Rupa Manjari in her service to Lalita Devi, who in turn is directly rendering intimate service to Radha and Krishna. On the altar of many Radha-Krishna temples, we can have the *darsana* of Lalita Sakhi next to Radha and Krishna, always ready to offer service to the Divine Couple.

Srila Rupa Gosvami writes, *"O Lalita-devi, Sri Radha and Krishna are performing Their pastimes in different groves in Vrindavana but actually, They are doing this under your shelter. Since these two transcendental lovers are under your protection and shelter, nothing is impossible for you to accomplish. Knowing your position, I don't require permission from anyone else. If you shower your mercy upon me, by your grace I can enter these pastimes. If anyone in Sri Vraja-mandala has even the slightest desire to serve the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani, then Lalita-devi immediately fulfils that desire and takes this blessed soul directly under her protection, giving them her full shelter."*

Sri Lalita-kunda

Sri Sri Radha Krishna and Lalita Sakhi on the banks of Lalita-kunda

Tulasi malas and paraphernalia are sold around Sri Radha-kunda

34. Sri Giriraja-sila

On the banks of Lalita-kunda, there is a wall at an angle with a large opening. Inside is a large *Govardhana-sila,* very beautifully decorated. Immediately on the right side is the canal between Syama-kunda and Lalita-kunda. During the cleaning of the *kundas*, the water is pumped into Lalita-kunda and then out into the fields. Raja Mansingh of Jaipur built this canal.

Beautiful Sri Giriraja-sila on the banks of Lalita-kunda

35. Sri Sri Lalita-bihari Mandira

This temple is known as the Lalita-Mohana Mandira and is dedicated to the transcendental loving pastimes enacted here between Lalita-devi and Lord Sri Krishna (Mohana). *'Bihari'* means the Supreme Enjoyer, or in other words, the Supreme Lord Krishna, the enjoyer of Lalita. Inside the temple, there is also a *Rasa-mandala*, which is one of the six *Rasa-mandalas* established by Sri Narayana Bhatta, commemorating *rasa-lila sthalis* of Lord Sri Krishna in the Radha-kunda area. This temple is located just next to Lalita-kunda and Mohana-kunda and is managed by Vaisnava devotees of the Nimbarka *sampradaya*.

Sri Sri Lalita-bihari

36. Manipura Maharaja Mandira (Radha Govinda Temple)

Inside this magnificent palatial temple are large-sized beautiful deities of Sri Sri Radha Govinda Ji. This temple came into being in the 19th century and belonged to Maharaja Gambhira Singh of Manipura. The grandson of Maharaja Gambhira Singh is now looking after the worship of Sri Sri Radha Govinda. Manipura state is in the far northeast corner of India. It is the only Vaisnava state of India. The Manipuris, generally, are the devout devotees of Lord Sri Krishna. Many of them adorn Vaisnava *tilaka* and attire during their daily chores. Illustrious, HH Svarupa Damodara Maharaj, a beloved disciple of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a modern-day scientist appeared in the remote Toubul village in Bishnupur district of Manipura.

Sri Sri Radha Govinda Ji at Manipuri Maharaja Mandira

37. Sri Sri Radha Vinoda Mandira

Sri Sri Radha Vinoda Mandira is located on Radha-kunda Parikrama Marg. Sri Sri Radha Vinoda Ji are the beloved deities of Srila Lokanatha dasa Gosvami. He got these deities from *Kisori-kunda* in Umrao at Khadiravana. He carried Them in a special bag around his neck. Srila Lokanatha dasa Gosvami stayed at this place in Radha-kunda for some time, worshipping his deities. The current beautiful deities are the *pratibhu murti* of Sri Sri Radha Vinoda Ji. The original deities are now in Jaipur, just around the corner from Radha Damodara Mandira. At this temple, the devotees continuously sing Hare Krishna kirtana. The *puspa-samadhi* of Srila Lokanatha dasa Gosvami, as well as the underground cave (gufa) where he used to stay at Radha-kunda, can be seen at Sri Sri Radha Gokulananda Mandira in Radha-kunda, which is near Sri Kundesvara Mahadeva Mandira.

Sri Sri Radha Vinoda Ji

The devotees performing kirtana at Sri Sri Radha Vinoda Mandira

38. Gop Kua

On the side of the Radha-kunda Parikrama Marg is a large raised well called Gop Kua, or cowherd well. This is also called Gop-kupa. Recently people have started calling it Gopi Kua,

but all old guides and saints refer to this place as Gop Kua. Next to the well is the residence of the King of Bharatpura. Built more than a hundred years ago, the inscription on the wall says Gop Kua. This is where the tongue of Govardhana was found. The same well was later excavated by Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami to provide water for washing clothes, so that the local Vrajavasis need not use the sacred waters of Radha-kunda. During the digging, the workmen struck a rock that started to bleed profusely, and they immediately ran to Raghunatha dasa to inform him of the incident. Fearing that some offence may have been committed, Raghunatha immediately halted the digging. That night in a dream, Sri Giri-Govardhana appeared before Raghunatha and informed him that the rock that began bleeding was, in fact, the tongue of Govardhana. Sri Giri-Govardhana then instructed Raghunatha to install the tongue of Govardhana in a shrine and worship with Tulasi leaves and water from Radha-kunda. This shrine is known as the *Jihva Mandira* (*Jihva* means tongue). The devotees performing parikrama of both Radha-kunda as well as Govardhana offer their respects here at Gop-kupa before continuing their parikrama. Near the Gop-kupa there are also the samadhis of various Vaisnavas at Radha-kunda.

Gop Kup

Sri Giriraja-sila at Gop Kup

39. Sri Madhavendra Puri Baithaka

This is the celebrated sitting place of Sri Madhavendra Puri on the banks of Syama-kunda where he sat down and rested during his *parikrama* around Govardhana Hill. At Sri Madhavendra Puri Baithaka there is a small shrine where we can have the *darsana* of his sitting place. This is the farthest corner of Syama-kunda and from his baithaka, we get a very glorious view of the entire Syama-kunda up to the Sangam. Madhavendra Puri was the spiritual master of Sri Isvara Puri, who was the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya. When Madhavendra Puri came here, Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda had not yet been discovered. By the will of Lord Krishna, Madhavendra Puri decided to stop at this spot next to the two paddy fields that were some years later, revealed by Lord Caitanya to be Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda. Sri Madhavendra Puri discovered the Gopala deity, who is known as Sri Nathaji, near Govinda-kunda and installed Him on Govardhana Hill. Sri Nathaji was later moved to a small town called Nathadwara in Rajasthan. Madhavendra Puri became celebrated as the devotee for whom the deity called Gopinatha, at Remuna in Odisha, stole a pot of *ksira* (condensed milk). *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila chapter 4,* entitled *"Sri Madhavendra Puri's Devotional Service"*, describes this pastime.

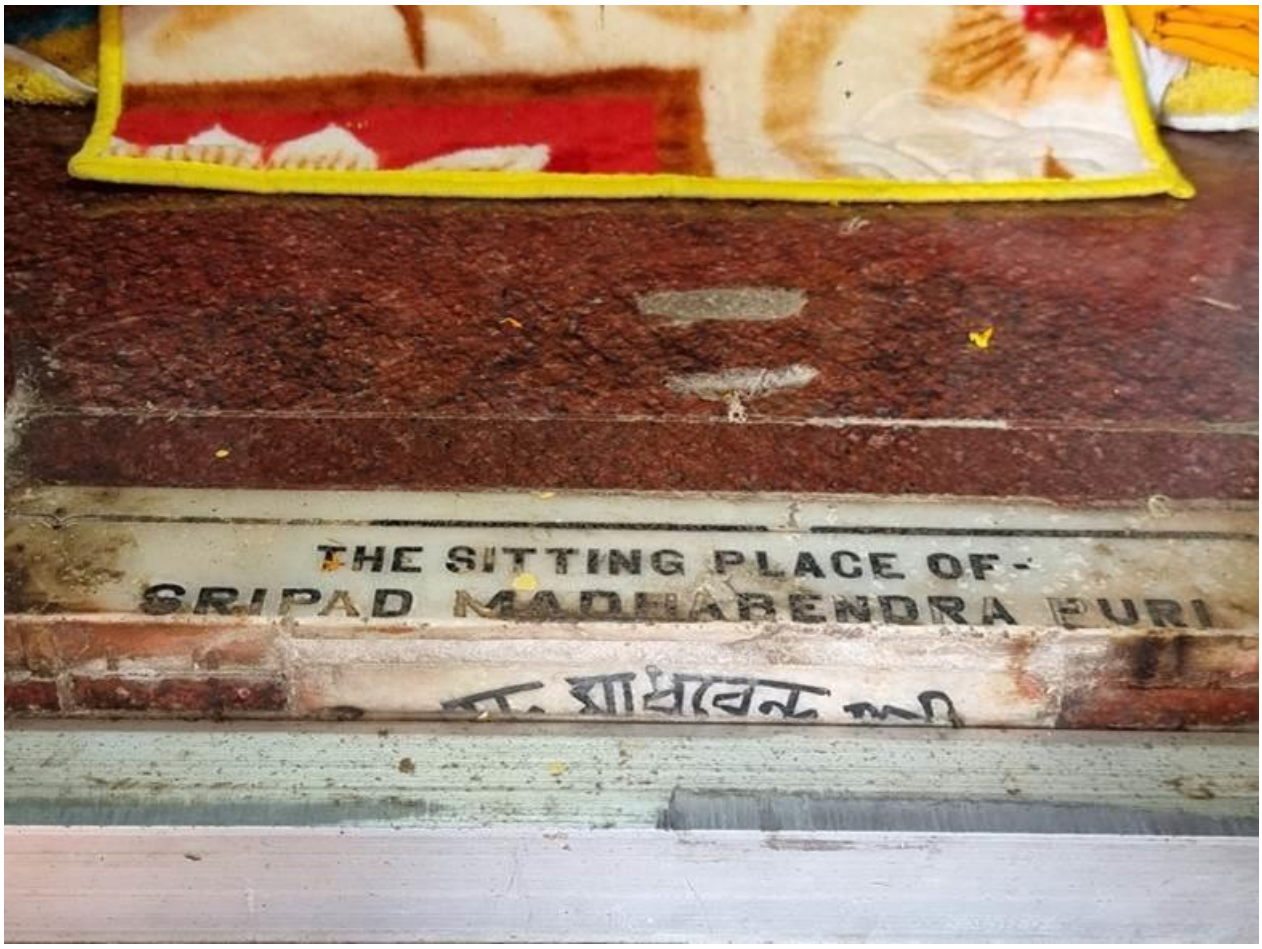
Sri Madhavendra Puri is described in *Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika*, verse 22, as being the incarnation of a *kalpa-vrksa*, a desire tree, of Goloka. This tree bears as its fruits the mellows of servitude, friendship, paternal, and conjugal love for Lord Krishna. Although in Goloka this tree stands in one place, in the form of Sri Madhavendra Puri, he wandered here and there distributing the divine fruits of love of Krishna to all. *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila chapter 9 texts 10-11* describe, *"All glories to Sri Madhavendra Puri, the storehouse of all devotional service unto Krishna! He is a desire tree of devotional service, and it is in him that the seed of devotional service first fructified. The seed of devotional service next fructified in the form of Sri Isvara Puri, and then the gardener Himself, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, became the main trunk of the tree of devotional service."* Sri Madhavendra Puri, also known as Sri Madhava Puri,

belonged to the disciplic succession from Madhvacarya and was a greatly celebrated *sannyasi*. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was the third disciplic descendant from Sri Madhavendra Puri. The process of worship in the disciplic succession of Madhvacarya was full of ritualistic ceremonies, with hardly a sign of love of Godhead. Sri Madhavendra Puri was the first person in that disciplic succession to exhibit the symptoms of love of Godhead and the first to write a poem beginning with the words *ayi dina-dayardra natha*, "O supremely merciful Personality of Godhead." In that poem is the seed of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's cultivation of love of Godhead.

Sri Isvara Puri appeared in a *brahmana* family and was the most beloved disciple of Srila Madhavendra Puri. *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Antya-lila* 8.28-31 states: "At the last stage of his life Sri Madhavendra Puri became an invalid and was completely unable to move, and Isvara Puri so completely engaged himself in his service that he personally cleaned up his stool and urine. Always chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and reminding Sri Madhavendra Puri about the pastimes of Lord Krishna in the last stage of his life, Isvara Puri gave the best service among his disciples. Thus Madhavendra Puri, being very pleased with him, blessed him, saying, 'My dear boy, I can only pray to Krishna that He will be pleased with you.' Thus, Isvara Puri, by the grace of his spiritual master, Sri Madhavendra Puri, became a great devotee in the ocean of love of Godhead." Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti states in his *Gurv-astaka* prayer, *yasya prasadad bhagavat-prasado yasyaprasadan na gatih kuto 'pi*: *"By the mercy of the spiritual master one is blessed by the mercy of Krishna. Without the grace of the spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement."* It is by the mercy of the spiritual master that one becomes perfect, as vividly exemplified here. A Vaisnava is always protected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but if he appears to be an invalid, this gives a chance to his disciples to serve him. Isvara Puri pleased his spiritual master by service, and by the blessings of his spiritual master he became such a great personality that Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted him as His spiritual master. (Purport of texts 10 and 11) Sri Madhavendra Puri's *samadhi* is in Remuna near Sri Ksira-cora-gopinatha Mandira.

Sri Madhavendra Puri Baithaka

Sri Madhavendra Puri and Lord Sri Krishna



Sitting place of Sri Madhavendra Puri

40. Asta-sakhi Mandira

This small temple is located close to Gop Kupa. In this temple are the deities of Sri Sri Radha Krishna accompanied by Their eight confidential assistants known as the *asta-sakhis*, namely,

Lalita, Visakha, Citra, Campakalata, Tungavidya, Indulekha, Rangadevi, and Sudevi. This temple was built by the Maharaja of Bharatpura and is the only *asta-sakhi* temple in the whole of Radha-kunda. At the time of this writing, the pujari is an elderly Vrajavasi named Raj Dulari who is very friendly.

Asta-sakhi Mandira

41. Sri Sri Nitai-Gaura Sitanatha Mandira

This temple is directly opposite the Sri Asta-sakhi temple. Here we can have the beautiful and merciful *darsana* of Sri Sri Gaura Nitai, accompanied by Sri Advaita Acarya. This temple is managed by the Vaisnavas from Manipura.

Entrance of Sri Sri Nitai-Gaura Sitanatha Mandira

Sri Sri Nitai-Gaura Sitanatha Mandira

42. Sri Sri Radha Madhava Mandira

The deities of Sri Sri Radha Madhava in this Mandira are the *pratibhu murtis* of Sri Jayadeva Gosvami's original deities which are now worshipped in Jaipur at the palatial Kanaka Bhavana.

Sri Jayadeva Gosvami was the author of the highly acclaimed *Gita-govinda*, which was read by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu every day while living at Jagannatha Puri in Odisha. Jayadeva Gosvami appeared some years before Lord Caitanya. The famous *Sri Dasavatara-stotram* glorifying the ten incarnations of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna was composed by Jayadeva Gosvami. In the temple compound there is a *puspa-samadhi* of Jayadeva Gosvami. This temple is presently managed by Manipura Vaisnavas.

Entrance of Sri Sri Radha Madhava of Sri Jayadeva Gosvami

Sri Sri Radha Madhava

Srila Narattoma dasa Thakura Mahasaya (top)

43. Sri Rama Mandira

This is a small temple situated on Radha-kunda Parikrama Marg. Here we can have the beautiful and blessed *darsana* of Sri Sri Sita Rama Laksmana Hanuman.

44. Sri Bankhandi Mahadeva Mandira

Guarding the eastern side of Radha-kunda is the famous Sri Bankhandi Mahadeva. There used to be a very large and beautiful *kadamba* forest surrounding this temple, which has now completely disappeared.

Sri Bankhandi Mahadeva

45. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu Baithaka (Tamala-tala)

This is the spot on the sacred banks of Syama-kunda where Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu sat in contemplation under a *tamala* tree, just before discovering Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda. Sitting here under a *tamala* tree, Lord Caitanya saw two rice paddy fields. One was called Kali and one was called Gauri. Kali means blackish and Gauri means golden. Lord Caitanya understood that these were none other than Syama-kunda and Radha-kunda. With whatever water was there, Lord Caitanya took His bath and chanted many beautiful prayers that are described in *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 18.7-11: "The attraction of Radha-kunda is as sweet as that of Srimati Radharani. Similarly, the glories of the kunda [lake] are as great as Srimati Radharani's. Because of its wonderful transcendental qualities, Radha-kunda is as dear to Krishna as Srimati Radharani. It was in that lake that the all-opulent Lord Sri Krishna performed His pastimes with Srimati Radharani with great pleasure and transcendental bliss. Whoever bathes just once in Radha-kunda attains Srimati Radharani's loving attraction for Sri Krishna. Who within this world can describe the glories and sweetness of Sri Radha-kunda?"* Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the most munificent *avatara*, by revealing the hidden location of Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda, has given the world a unique gift: the most sacred of all the sacred tirthas within creation. Generation after generation of Vaisnavas the world over can come to Radha-kunda and, absorbed in a deep mood of Krishna consciousness by having darsana of the sacred waters of these transcendental lakes, can achieve the greatest blessings.

This place is also known as *Tamala-tala*, after the sacred *tamala* tree that grew here. The present tree is an offshoot of the original one under which Lord Caitanya sat. The *ghata* nearby is known as *Tamala-tala-ghata*. At present, this site has been exquisitely renovated by a

Babaji from the Philippines. He has expanded this place and put beautiful carved stone everywhere. In the middle of the shrine is a charming seated white marble deity of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In front are the impressions of Lord Caitanya's lotus footprints, originally believed to have been established by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. For the paintings around the walls of this shrine, one devotee from Delhi gave a generous donation to make colourful bas-relief panels depicting Lord Caitanya's pastimes. In one panel, we can have the *darsana* of Lord Caitanya dancing with Srila Haridasa Thakura's body in Puri. The next panel depicts Lord Caitanya dancing in Jharikhanda forest making the animals also chant and dance. Then we see the pastime where Lord Caitanya met the *mayavadi* sannyasis in Varanasi. Out of humility, Lord Caitanya sat where people washed their feet, but Prakasananda Sarasvati is taking Lord Caitanya by the hand and inviting Him to sit with the other sannyasis. Another panel is the deliverance of Jagai and Madai. The next one is Lord Caitanya dancing in front of Jagannatha Ratha-yatra in Puri. After that we see *Pancha-tattva* performing *Harinama-sankirtana* in Mayapur. Then Lord Caitanya discovering Radha-kunda in the paddy field. The next panel shows Lord Caitanya embracing a *Govardhana-sila*. Next, we see Lord Caitanya meeting Srila Sanatana Gosvami at Candrasekhara's house in Varanasi. And finally, there is the Panihati *Cida-dadhi* festival. Just beside the baithaka, there is a very nice *ghata* from which we get a wonderful view of Syama-kunda. When the water level is down, from here we can see four platforms that mark the corners of the original kunda made by Lord Krishna's great-grandson, Vajranabha, called Vajra-kunda.

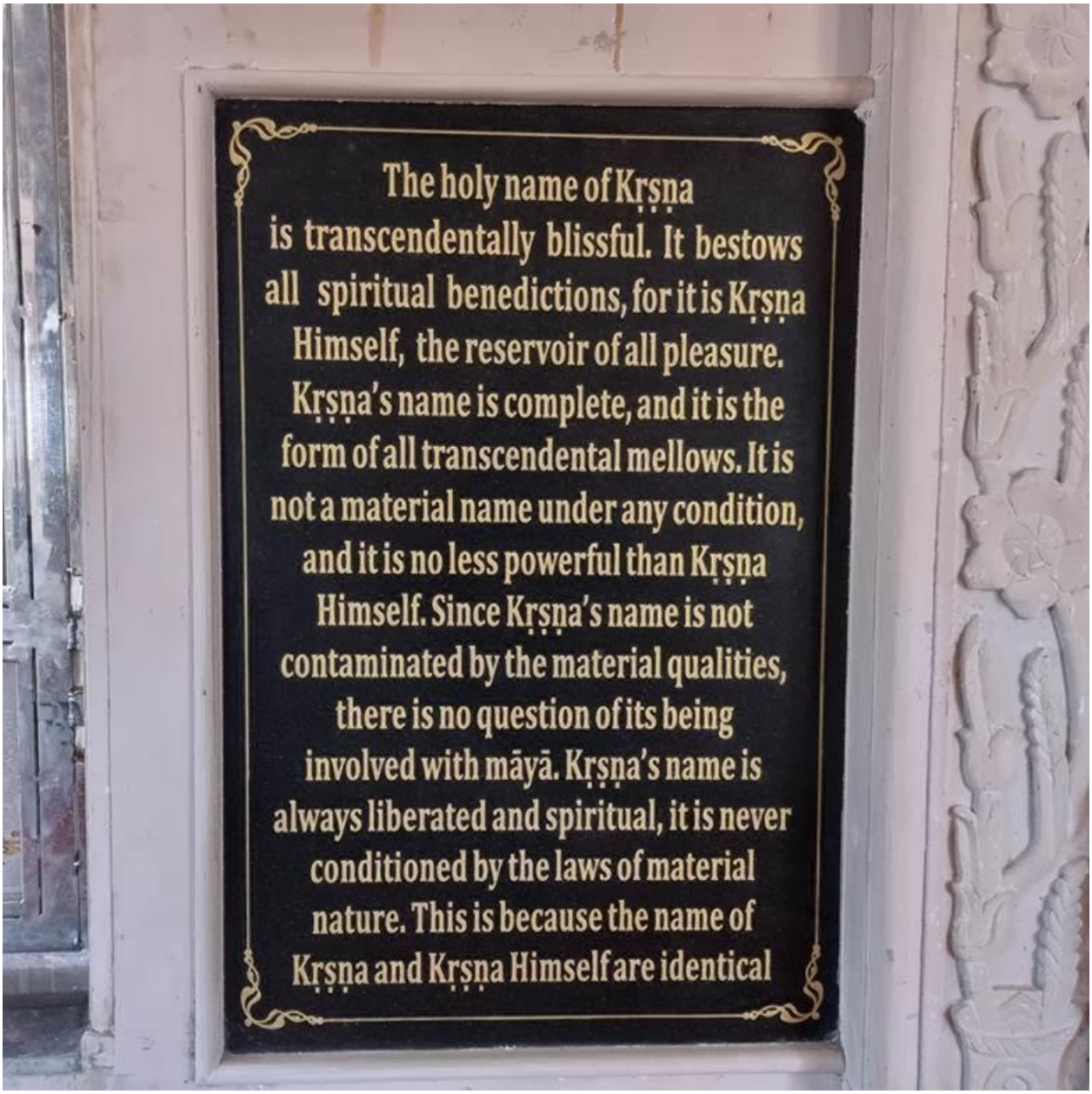
॥ श्री-राधा रमणो विजयते ॥ जय गौर ॥ ॥ Shri Radharamano Vijayate ॥ ॥ Jai Gaur ॥
Welcome to
Supreme Lord Shri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Baithak
स्वयं भगवान श्री कृष्ण चैतन्य महाप्रभु बैठक
স্বয়ং ভগবান শ্রীকৃষ্ণ চৈতন্য মহাপ্রভু বৈঠক
Tamal Tala, Radha Kunda

Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Baithaka at Talama-tala, Sri Radha-kunda

Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu

Lotus footprints of Lord Caitanya

Lord Caitanya at Sri Radha-kunda and Sri Syama-kunda and the Vrajavasis


The holy name of Kṛṣṇa
is transcendentally blissful. It bestows
all spiritual benedictions, for it is Kṛṣṇa
Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure.
Kṛṣṇa's name is complete, and it is the
form of all transcendental mellows. It is
not a material name under any condition,
and it is no less powerful than Kṛṣṇa
Himself. Since Kṛṣṇa's name is not
contaminated by the material qualities,
there is no question of its being
involved with māyā. Kṛṣṇa's name is
always liberated and spiritual, it is never
conditioned by the laws of material
nature. This is because the name of
Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical

The holy name of Krishna is transcendentally blissful. It bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Krishna Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure. Krishna's name is complete, and it is the form of all transcendental mellows. It is not a material name under any condition, and it is no less powerful than Krishna Himself. Since Krishna's name is not contaminated by the material qualities, there is no question of its being involved with maya. Krishna's name is always liberated and spiritual. It is never conditioned by the laws of material nature. This is because the name of Krishna and Krishna Himself are identical.

46. Pasa-khela-ghata

At this celebrated *ghata* on the banks of Syama-kunda, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna enjoy the pastimes of *pasa-khela*, which is a board game played with dice during Their midday pastimes. This wonderful pastime is described in *Sri Krishna-bhavanamrta*, as well as *Sri Govinda-lilamrta*. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura describes: *"Once upon a time, Srimati Radharani told Lalita sakhi that Krishna, being very strong, had powerfully defeated the gopis in various fun games like honey-wine drinking, water sports, and swimming. Now they should diminish His pride by challenging Him to a game that requires some brains. Radharani then challenged Krishna to a game of pasa. Nandimukhi sat on Krishna's side as a witness and Vrinda-devi sat on Radharani's side. Kundalata was the game board supervisor. Madhumangala kept score for Krishna and Lalita for Radharani." Pasa-khela-ghata* is close to Sri Vallabhacarya Baithaka. Continuing the Govardhana parikrama path for about 20 meters, just opposite the Meera

Manoranjan Dharmshala, we see a door opening to Syama-kunda. If we enter and go down the *ghata*, we reach *pasa-khela-ghata*.

47. Sri Vallabhacarya Baithaka

Sri Vallabhacarya Baithaka is near Pasa-khela-ghata. Here we can have the *darsana* of three *baithakas* - Sri Vallabhacarya, his son Sri Gusainji, and Sri Gokulanathaji. *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 19.61* describes about Sri Vallabha Bhatta.

Sri Vallabhacarya Baithaka

48. Sri Sri Radha Madana-mohana Mandira

In this temple we can have the *darsana* of the beautiful *pratibhu murtis* of Sri Sri Radha Madana-mohana. The original deity of Madana-mohana was established in Vrindavana by Srila Sanatana Gosvami. The original deity is now being worshipped at Karauli in Rajasthan. This is also the place where the original deity of Sri Madana-mohana stayed while going to Jaipur. Also, to the left of the deity room is the sitting place (*baithaka*) of Srila Sanatana Gosvami, who was a regular visitor to Radha-kunda and sat at this spot when performing his *bhajana*. For this reason, a temple was later built at the very same place. This temple also has its own *ghata* on the bank of Syama-kunda known as *Madana-mohana ghata*. If we go up the stairs here, we can get a wonderful view of the Sangam. Continuing until just before the intersection going to the Sangam, there is a grand archway on the right side that leads us to Sri Sri Radha Madana-mohana Mandira.

Beautiful darsana of Sri Sri Radha Madana-mohana Mandira of Srila Sanatana Gosvami at Sri Radha-kunda

Lotus footprints of Lord Nityananda, Lord Gauranga Mahaprabhu, Lord Sri Krishna and Srimati Radharani (left to right)

49. Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai Mahaprabhu Mandira

The beautiful deities of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda at this temple were brought from Bengal over 50 years ago and worshipped here by an old widow. After her demise, two old Babajis continued to perform the worship of the Deities. About thirty years ago, the Panch committee in charge of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's *bhajana kutira* arranged for the construction of the present temple. This temple holds a very wonderful swing festival, Jhulana-yatra, every year, which is very popular with the local Vrajavasis and especially with the children of Radha-kunda. HG Deena Bandhu Das writes in his book *Vraja-lila Part 3 – Giriraja, The King of Mountains*, *"These tall wooden Deities of Sri Sri Gaura Nitai are some of the most beautiful I have seen. Their large lotus petal eyes seem to be emanating Krishna prema. Their lotus hands, which in most temples we see raised over Their heads, are down with the palms facing toward us. My opinion is, They are telling us to take the mercy! Or possibly They are motioning to us to consider why are we staying in this dark material world? Come on with Us! Chant the Holy Names of Lord Krishna and come with Us back to Godhead!"* The merciful *darsana* of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu at this temple also reminds us of the *darsana* of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu at Sri Dhameswara Mahaprabhu temple at Koladvipa in Nabadwipa town. The temple is located at the very beginning of the path that leads us down to the Sangam of Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda.

Sri Sri Gaura Nitai

50. Imli-tala and Sri Sri Vraja-mohana Mandira

A short distance after Sri Sri Nitai Gaura Mandira there is a small path on the left that used to take us into a small courtyard of Sri Vraja-mohana Mandira. This area used to be known as Imli-tala. In the courtyard of this temple used to stand a large tamarind tree (Imli-tala). This tree has in the course of time disappeared, but a very wonderful pastime was enacted here by Sri Sri Radha and Krishna that was directly witnessed by Srila Rupa Gosvami. One day, Rupa Gosvami came here and sat down near a large tamarind tree to perform his *bhajana*. After some time, he happened to glance up at the tree and saw a most beautiful swing hanging down from one of the branches. The swing was designed in such a way that two persons were

able to sit facing one another. Within a few moments, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna suddenly arrived on the spot along with all Their *sakhis* and *manjaris*. Krishna then climbed onto the swing and invited Srimati Radharani to join Him. Srimati Radharani at first refused to join Krishna on the swing, because He always made the swing go too high, which frightened Her. Krishna then asked Radharani to sit down on the swing but again She refused. Krishna then pleaded with Srimati Radharani, and this time promised not to make the swing go too high. The *sakhis* and *manjaris* also requested Radharani to take Her seat on the swing, promising that they would make sure the swing did not go very high, by pushing it themselves. Having been requested by all of them, Srimati Radharani finally relented and joined Krishna on the swing. The *sakhis* and *manjaris* then started to gently push the swing to and fro, and Srimati Radharani immediately began enjoying the pleasant and soothing atmosphere of Radha-kunda. When Krishna saw that Srimati Radharani was feeling in a relaxed mood, He very cunningly started moving His legs to make the swing gradually go a little bit higher.

Before the *sakhis* and *manjaris* could realize what was happening, the swing was suddenly going so high that it was way above their heads. Srimati Radharani became extremely frightened when She saw the swing was going so high and pleaded with Krishna to stop the swing and let Her down. Krishna simply laughed at Radharani's request and made the swing go even higher. The swing eventually went so high that it appeared that it would go right over the top. Feeling very frightened that She might fall down, Srimati Radharani loudly screamed and leapt into Krishna's arms, holding on to Him for dear life. Lord Krishna felt very happy to have Srimati Radharani embracing Him so tightly, and being in such an ecstatic mood, made the swing go so high that it went right over the top and came down on the other side, completing a full circle, much to the amazement of all the *sakhis* and *manjaris*, who spontaneously clapped their hands and started singing the glories of the Divine lovers Sri Sri Radha and Krishna.

After witnessing the enactment of this wonderful pastime, Rupa Gosvami, out of intense ecstasy, fell to the ground unconscious. When he eventually regained his senses, he saw that Sri Sri Radha and Krishna had gone, but the swing was still there hanging in the tree. To his amazement, he saw that the tree's branches had been completely twisted around due to the force of the swinging. Even until recent times, devotees used to flock to this spot to have darsana of the twisted branches of the tamarind tree. Unfortunately, on the evening of May 21, 1991, a huge dust storm came through Vrindavana and Radha-kunda and that tamarind tree fell over. Where that old tree used to be, now a dharmasala is built. Sadly, there is nothing to see anymore. There is no particular place marked out in Radha-kunda where Srila Rupa Gosvami performed *bhajana*. It is known, however, that he visited Radha-kunda many times. Thus, this Imli-tala is of paramount importance to the followers of Srila Rupa Gosvami as it is his only known *bhajana* and sitting place in Radha-kunda.

51. Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira

Near Sri Sri Gaura Nitai Mandira there is a large gate to Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira and Lord Nityananda Prabhu's Baithaka. Madhu Pandita's original deity of Sri Gopinatha from Vrindavana stayed here on His way to Jaipur. Thus, we have Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Temple here. Then in Kamyavana, there is a very beautiful temple of Gopinatha where He also stayed before going to Jaipur. At Sri Gopinatha Mandira near Ma Jahnava's Baithaka, on the left side of Lord Krishna, is the deity of Sri Ananga-manjari, who is Ma Jahnava's form in *Vraja-lila*. The same is here in this temple also. Recently, this sacred place was very nicely renovated. There is wonderful carved sandstone on the new temple, a new Deity room, and many other improvements.

Entrance of Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira and Lord Nityananda Prabhu Baithaka

Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha

52. Lord Nityananda Baithaka

Situated in the courtyard of Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha Mandira is the sitting place (*baithaka*) of Lord Nityananda. In the rear of the temple is the sitting place of Lord Nityananda, which has

also been pleasantly renovated. There is a small, very beautiful shrine for Lord Nityananda with a picture of the Nityananda Deity from Ekacakra Dhama. Affectionately known as Nitai, Lord Nityananda is a direct expansion of Lord Balarama, Krishna's elder brother, and appeared on earth to assist Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu in spreading the *sankirtana* movement. While travelling on pilgrimage all over India, Lord Nityananda, in the mood of Lord Balarama, came to Vraja and in an ecstasy searched all over for His little brother Kanhaiya (Krishna). Wandering around Govardhana Hill and calling out the name of Kanhaiya, Lord Nityananda fell at the feet of the Vrajavasis, begging them to inform Him of the whereabouts of His younger brother. Everyone thought that this wandering mendicant (*avadhuta*) must have gone completely mad.

In utter desperation, Lord Nityananda came to this place near the banks of Radha-kunda and sat down while crying uncontrollably at the thought of separation from Krishna. While He was sitting here, suddenly a celestial voice from the sky announced that His younger brother, Kanhaiya, had now appeared in Navadvipa. Lord Nityananda got up and immediately left for Bengal, where He eventually met Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu for the first time at the house of Nandana Acarya and joined Him to propagate the *sankirtana-yajna*.

nityanandam aham naumi sarvananda-karam param
hari-nama-pradam devam avadhuta-siromanim

"I bow down to the Supreme Lord Nityananda Prabhu, who is the awarder of the highest joy to all, the bestower of the holy name and the crest jewel of all paramahamsa mendicants."

Lord Nityananda Prabhu Baithaka (sitting place)

Lord Nityananda Prabhu Baithaka

53. Sri Banke-bihari Mandira at Sangam

Between the *sangam* and Govinda-ghata is the temple of Sri Banke-bihari. Banke means the Supreme Enjoyer, and Bihari is a name of Lord Krishna. The original deity of Banke-bihari was discovered at Nidhuvana in Vrindavana by Swami Haridasa, a follower of the *Nimbarka-sampradaya* and a contemporary of Srila Jiva Gosvami. Swami Haridasa was famous for singing and composing Vaisnava *bhajanas*. To the right of the altar is a room which is the *baithaka* (sitting place) of Swami Haridasa. For this reason, this temple of Sri Banke-bihari was built at this spot. There are three very rare Govardhana silas kept on the altar at this temple, and the pujari will be happy to explain the pastimes behind them.

Sri Banke-bihari Mandira at Sangam-vedi Sri Radha-kunda

54. Sri Sri Radha Gokulananda Mandira

Sri Sri Radha-Gokulananda Mandira is near the southwestern side, near Kundesvara Mahadeva Mandira. Here we can have the *darsana* of the *pratibhu* deities of Sri Sri Radha-Gokulananda. At this temple is also the *Puspa samadhi* of Srila Lokanatha Gosvami and an underground cave (gufa) where he stayed at Radha-kunda.

Bhajana sthali of Srila Lokanatha Gosvami inside the underground cave at Sri Sri Radha-Gokulananda Mandira

***Puspa samadhi* of Srila Lokanatha Gosvami**

Sri Sri Radha-Gokulananda Mandira of Srila Lokanatha Gosvami at Radha-kunda

55. Sri Kundesvara Mahadeva Mandira

Sri Kundesvara Mahadeva is one of the four Lord Siva deities who protect Radha-kunda from the intrusion of unqualified persons. It is near the southwestern side as we enter Radha-kunda, passing the Radha-Gokulananda temple. It is etiquette to offer prayers to Sri Kundesvara Mahadeva while doing the parikrama of the sacred *kundas*.

Sri Kundesvara Mahadeva

56. Sri Sri Radha Kunja-bihari Gaudiya Matha

The beautiful deities of Sri Sri Radha Kunja-bihari along with Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu were established by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura in the year 1935. To the right of the deity room is the *Puspa-samadhi* of Srila Gaurakisora dasa Babaji. Around the temple are beautiful and instructive dioramas of the pastimes of Lord Krishna and Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Sri Sri Radha Kunja-bihari and Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura

57. Malyahari-kunda

Malyahari-kunda is situated near Sri Sri Radha Kunja-bihari Gaudiya Matha, a little off the parikrama path. A very wonderful pearl pastime took place here between Lord Krishna and the

gopis of Srimati Radharani on the banks of this beautiful lake that has been revealed by Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami in his book *Mukta-carita*. Once on Dipavali, Srimati Radharani and the *gopis* came and sat here at Malyahari-kunda and began to string necklaces made from pearls, so they could decorate their cows. On hearing this, Krishna also came there and on seeing the wonderful pearls, asked the *gopis* for a few to decorate His favourite cows named Harini and Hasini. Even though Krishna repeatedly asked the *gopis* for some pearls, they ignored Him. Finally, Lalita told Krishna that she could find only one broken pearl for Him and that this was the perfect pearl to decorate His cows. Feeling upset at the *gopis* behaviour, Krishna told Lalita that He would grow His own pearls and in an angry mood stomped off to find Mother Yasoda.

Krishna begged Mother Yasoda for some pearls. Mother Yasoda said, "Lala, what are You going to do with pearls?" Krishna said, "O Maiya, I am going to sow them in the ground, in the agricultural field that Baba just ploughed." Mother Yasoda laughed at Krishna's request and informed Him that pearls do not grow in gardens but come from oysters that live in the sea. Not caring for Mother Yasoda's words, Krishna demanded that she give Him some pearls. Mother Yasoda found some pearls for Krishna and He immediately went and planted them near the bank of the river Yamuna. Krishna then sent His friend Madhumangala to beg some milk from the *gopis* so He could water His pearl garden. On hearing Madhumangala's request, the *gopis* started laughing at the idea. Mother Yasoda eventually arranged some milk, and Krishna went and watered His pearl garden. Within a few days, small green shoots began to appear and when Krishna told the *gopis* about it, they simply laughed, saying that they were only shoots of thorn bushes. After a few more days, the shoots became creepers covered with beautiful multi-coloured pearls, emitting the sweetest aroma throughout Vraja.

When the *gopis* heard about this, they became envious. Krishna then began to tease the *gopis*, that His pearls were much bigger and brighter than their pearls. The *gopis* then wanted some of Krishna's beautiful pearls, but Krishna refused. The *gopis*, on the advice of Nandimukhi, then decided to grow their own pearl garden. They took all the pearls from their house and planted them all in a garden. Three times a day, the *gopis* watered their pearl garden with large quantities of milk, ghee and butter, thinking that they would grow much better pearls than Krishna. Unfortunately, not a single pearl grew and only thorn bushes appeared in the *gopis'* garden. Krishna came there with His cowherd friends, *Gopas*, and started laughing at the *gopis*. Just to tease the *gopis*, Krishna began to decorate all His cows with the most beautiful and exquisite pearl necklaces. Even the monkeys received wonderful pearl necklaces. However, Krishna gave not a single pearl to the *gopis*. The *gopis* could not produce any pearls in their garden and became full of anxiety, thinking their elders would punish them for taking all the pearls from their homes and burying them in the ground.

The *gopis* decided to send Candramukhi and Kanchana Lata with a large quantity of gold to purchase pearls from Krishna. However, Krishna refused and informed them that each *gopi* should come individually to barter for the pearls. The *gopis* had to swallow their pride to go and ask Krishna if they could buy some pearls from Him. All the *gopis* decided to go to Krishna except Srimati Radharani, who hid nearby. The *gopis* were very eager to buy all the pearls. Krishna loudly announced, "All right, whoever doesn't come personally to take pearls has to pay four times the price." The *gopis* were furious. "First, You have to settle the price." A big argument broke out between Krishna, the *Gopas* and the *gopis*. Krishna then gave only the very smallest pearl to Visakha for Radharani and told her that if she did not pay immediately, she would be arrested and locked up in Krishna's private garden. Subala, who was acting as mediator, requested Krishna to give a fair price for the pearls. Opening the box, Subala showed all the beautiful pearls to the *gopis*. The *gopis* then started to haggle with Krishna over the price of the pearls, but not being able to reach any agreement, left with Srimati Radharani for Radha-kunda. This *lila* all started from Malyahari-kunda. Still, the argument over the price of the pearls is going on even until now, as these *Vraja-lilas* are eternal. Then in great ecstasy,

Krishna began to string all the pearls into beautiful necklaces with His own hands. He then selected the most exquisite of all the necklaces and placed it into a golden box. On the top of the box, He engraved the name of Srimati Radharani. Krishna prepared similar boxes for all the *gopis* and sent them as gifts. Radharani was overjoyed to receive the fabulous gift of pearls. She immediately sent Krishna some delicious preparations of foodstuffs that She had personally cooked, along with betel nuts and scented garlands. Having received Krishna's gift, the *gopis* returned to their homes in great happiness, wearing the necklaces of exquisite pearls. The elders were greatly surprised to see them return home adorned with so many fabulous and costly pearls.

Malyahari-kunda

58. Siva Khor (Siva Puskarini)

Siva Khor is at the boundary of Radha-Kunda. *Siva Puskarini* literally means 'lake of Lord Siva'. *Padma Purana (Vrindavana Mahatmya)* describes a very sweet pastime which reveals the causeless mercy of Srimati Radharani upon those who take shelter of Her lotus feet. Once a female jackal came out of the jungle to drink water from Siva Khor. A jackal is generally considered a low-class beast. Even amongst the animals, a jackal is untouchable. This jackal was seen by some children, and they began to chase after it with sticks. Being beaten by the sticks, she felt terrible pain, ran for her life, and hid in a foxhole. The children then lit a fire outside the hole in the hope of catching the jackal. The jackal began crying in piteous agony.

At that time, Srimati Radharani, who after bathing at Radha-kunda was passing nearby, heard the piteous cries of the jackal. She immediately asked Her *sakhis* to go and see what was wrong, saying that no one should be in distress in Her favourite place of Radha-kunda. On reaching the spot, Radharani's girlfriends chased the naughty children. They brought the frightened jackal to Srimati Radharani. The jackal immediately fell on the ground crying before Radharani. Srimati Radharani, by Her great kindness, patted that jackal on the head with Her lotus-like hand and awarded her *Krishna-prema*. In this age of Kali-yuga, we are all more or

less jackals, and our only hope is to really humble ourselves. We must free ourselves of pride, understand what our real position is – insignificant, helpless, hopeless, utterly dependent on the mercy of the Lord and His devotees. In that mood, to appeal to Srimati Radharani, I very sincerely, in a humble state of mind, cry now Her holy names. In the mood of that jackal, how many times have we been, birth after birth, beaten by the sticks of maya, burnt by the flames of illusion? Let us cry out for Srimati Radharani's mercy and the mercy of Her devotees. In the Kali-yuga, Radharani appears as Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu to deliver all the jackals of this age through the divine *maha-mantra: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*. It is then appropriate that we come and worship this consciousness as we enter Sri Radha-kunda. Sri Radha-kunda is the supreme most holy of all holy places. There is no more sanctified abode in either the material or spiritual worlds. At this time, let us offer our most prostrated obeisances to Sri Syama-kunda and Radha-kunda, who are none other than the ecstatic, ambrosial love of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna in liquid form. And let us pray that we can be in a proper state of consciousness to give pleasure to the Lord as we are dancing and chanting in our Govardhana Parikrama. *[HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj lecture Kartika Yatra 1998 to Vrindavana]*

Site of Siva Khor at ancient Rama-lila Maidan at Sri Radha-kunda

59. Ramesvara Mahadeva Mandira

Next to the Siva Puskarini lake is a small roadside temple that has the deity (*linga*) of Lord Siva known as Ramesvara Mahadeva, the protector of the northern side of Radha-kunda.

Sri Ramesvara Mahadeva

60. Golden Mahaprabhu Mandira and Gaudiya Vaisnava Museum

Golden Mahaprabhu Mandira is situated near the canal on the way to Uddhava-kunda. This enormous temple, built in Puri style with red sandstone and no bricks, is meant to last a thousand years. A Babaji built this beautiful temple. Inside, we can have the *darsana* of a very tall deity of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu with His right hand raised. Across the road from Golden Mahaprabhu Mandira, there is a wonderful Gaudiya Vaisnava Museum depicting the wonderful timeless pictures and portraits of our great Vaisnava acaryas.

Entrance of Golden Mahaprabhu Mandira

Golden Mahaprabhu Mandira

Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu

Wonderful Gaudiya Vaisnava Museum across the road from Golden Mahaprabhu Mandira

Gaudiya Vaisnava Museum

61. Radha Surabhi Goshala (Surabhi Gauseva Niketan)

Just on the outskirts of Radha-kunda, there is a wonderful Goshala, Radha Surabhi Gaushala (also known as Surabhi Gauseva Niketan). This Goshala was founded by Friederike Irina Bruning (Sudevi Dasi), a German citizen who has lived in Radha Kund for over 35-40 years. She has dedicated her life to taking care of sick, injured, abandoned, and blind cows. The Gaushala houses between 1800 and 2500 cows and calves. In 2019, she was awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian award, for her selfless service. She funds the high monthly operating costs (medicines, food, staff) through her own income from properties in Berlin. Indeed, it is an incredible experience to visit this Goshala. It is very inspiring to see the dedication of Sudevi Dasi. It is highly recommended for visitors to Radha Kunda to visit her Goshala.

Radha Surabhi Goshala

Friederike Irina Bruning (Sudevi Dasi)

In 2019, she was awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian award, for her selfless service.

62. Manipuri Sri Nutana-bihari Mandira

Sri Nutana-bihari Mandira is near Radha Vinoda Mandira. Here we can have the blessed darsana of Sri Nutana-bihari Ji. This temple is managed by Manipura devotees.

Sri Nutana-bihari Ji Mandira

Sri Nutana-bihari Ji

63. Anand Bazar

Anand Bazar is just on the outskirts of Radha-kunda on the road to Vrindavana. It is run by ISKCON devotees and serves Krishna prasadam to the residents of Radha-kunda and the pilgrims visiting here.

Anand Bazar

Useful Resources:

Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 18.7-14:
https://vedabase.io/en/library/cc/madhya/18/7/

Nectar of Instruction:
https://vedabase.io/en/library/noi/9/
https://vedabase.io/en/library/noi/10/
https://vedabase.io/en/library/noi/11/

The Slaying of Arista, the Bull Demon:
https://vedabase.io/en/library/sb/10/36/

Appearance of Sri Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda:
https://vedabase.io/en/library/sb/10/36/16/

Kamsa sends Akrura for Krishna:
https://vedabase.io/en/library/kb/36/

Vraja-lila Part 3 – Giriraja the King of Mountains:
https://iskconvrindavanmart.com/product/vraja-lila-giriraja-the-king-of-mountains-part-three-full-color-photo-book/

Sri Radha-kunda Parikrama:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Z_CVDoXEoY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVa24JjhrDg

Vraja Mandala Darsana - A 30 Day Parikrama Experience:
https://www.amazon.com/Vraja-Mandala-Darsana-Parikrama-Experience/dp/8193563557
(book)

HH Radhanath Swami lecture on Radha-kunda (1998):
https://audio.iskcondesiretree.com/02_-_ISKCON_Swamis/ISKCON_Swamis_-_R_to_Y/His_Holiness_Radhanath_Swami/Lectures/02_-_Yatra/1998_Vrindavan_yatra/Vrindavan_Yatra_1998_07_-_Radha-kunda_-_Radhanath_Swami.mp3

Vraja Mandala Parikrama (Set of 4 DVDs) - A documentary on ISKCON's Vrindavan Vraja-mandala Parikrama:
https://www.touchstonemedia.com/products/vraja-mandal-parikram-set-4-dvds-touchstone-media

Vraja Mandala Parikrama: https://vrajamandaladarsana.com

Holy Pilgrimages – Journey to the Holy Dhamas: https://Holy-Pilgrimages.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HolyPilgrimages

Downloadable PDFs of Articles (Archive):
https://archive.org/details/@chandan_yatra_das

Downloadable PDFs of Articles (Scribd):
https://www.scribd.com/user/737943473/chandanyatradas/uploads

Holy Dham: www.HolyDham.com

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare |
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare ||